WITHIN THE MORAL EYE--
PECKINPAH'S ART OF VISUAL NARRATION

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Susan Elaine Marshall

for my parents

and for Angela

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WITHIN THE MORAL EYE--
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This study explores the new species of morality that Sam Peckinpah's cinematic imagination creates in The Wild Bunch, The Ballad of Cable Hogue, and Convoy in its interaction with the moving color image. The new morality appears most prominently in the process of growth--a three-phase "moral advance"--that emerges both within the movies, and from one to the next. This new morality is not a structure imposed upon the narrative, but an inherent method that arises with and in the concrete acts of the movies' images. In its largest dimension, the birth of the new morality in Peckinpah's movies enacts the transformation from a morality of words to a morality of images, or from literary to cinematic art.

Structurally, the study proceeds from the earliest to the latest of the three movies. Chapter One shows how Peckinpah's imagination, working through the narrative act of "shooting out," comes to dispose

of the Bunch's characterization as killers and to see them as new images valued for their powers of transition. The chapter further seeks to elucidate the difficulties that the imaginative camera eye encounters in shedding the constraints of historical and documentary narration implicit within the movie's opening black and white still-shot.

Chapter Two shows how Peckinpah shifts his focus from the male "bunch" to the individual, and brings forward the transforming potential within the female image. Through the moral encounter with Hildy's image, Cable evolves his individual human worth; and the camera eye, imagining Cable's story as a traditionally verbal form--"The Ballad"--comes to release Cable's visual powers, and in the process expose the limits of his humanistic character.

Centering the cinematic eye's inherent powers of action as they are evolved within Convoy, Chapter Three works out the concrete process through which the movie brings into view a new universe of images. The chapter proceeds, through the movie's narrative act of "convoying," to perform the transformation out of the old divisive morality promoted by Lyle and the "voice of reason," and into the new visual morality--apparent in the image of Rubber Duck--that the movies, as narrative art, enact.

INTRODUCTION

When I first began looking at Sam Peckinpah's movies and trying to make sense of them, I was struck by two things. First, given what appeared to me to begin as simple, straight-forward stories, I was excited by how exuberantly alive the movie's images were and by how much there was to see. Second, as I read the criticism that was available on the movies, I became annoyed by its complacency. Most of the voices speaking about Peckinpah movies sounded utterly secure in their pronouncements without ever touching on the event in them that I was responding to. I began to wonder whether we were seeing the same movies.

Equally distressing was the fact that, of the movies I had access to, the ones I tended to like better--particularly The Ballad of Cable Hogue and Convoy--were almost unanimously panned by critics and by people I talked to. Cable Hogue, described as "vacuous and ineffectually humorous"[1] and "a critical and commercial failure,"[2] disturbed critics with its "problematic" ending. And Convoy was usually written off as a Western about trucks. Movies that tended to receive serious attention were most often the violent ones, like The Wild Bunch. But at the same time it was hailed as a classic Western, The Wild Bunch was deplored for its violence. The more I looked at the movies, and the more I read

about them, the further those two experiences diverged--and the more I came to rely upon what my eye was seeing.

At least part of the discrepancy between the visual and critical experiences with the movies came from the fact that, for the most part, the critics were "reading" the movies; they were approaching them as though they were literary events with critical notions that, while they may work for literature, do not always transfer to a medium that narrates through moving color images. For example, critics usually approach The Wild Bunch as a movie "about" violence. Even Peckinpah, discussing the movie in interviews, takes this attitude: "I was trying to make a few comments on violence and the people who live by violence."[3] However, "violence" as a theme in the literary sense of an idea that is literally "laid down" on (that is the etymological meaning of "theme") the narrative, or of an idea that the narrative illustrates, does not account for what happens in The Wild Bunch. It does not explain, for instance, how the violent cinematic action of the shootouts always works to free the Bunch from some restriction on their movement, or how the camera's violent action always exceeds what the Bunch intend. Without doubt, the Bunch are violent men; but the violent acts performed through the camera eye do more than simply express their character or illustrate a theme. It is Peckinpah's artistic good sense, and the good fortune of the viewers of his movies, that the Peckinpah talking about them is not the same as the Peckinpah making them.

Among the critics, Paul Seydor gives a more sophisticated account of Peckinpah's cinematic "style" in The Wild Bunch--an account within which he includes the cinematic violence performed through the shootouts--

and its relation to what he sees as the movie's themes and to its characters:

> In the hands of a genuinely serious artist, style is never a mere extravagance used to decorate the material. It is determined by the material, has something of its own to say, and constitutes a kind of subtext that runs parallel to the main text. If the artist is any good, if he has mastered the resources of his craft, then it is not unusual to find that the style is telling us much the same thing as the manifest content of the artwork is telling us. We have seen that Peckinpah's fragmented editing and telephoto compositions have a psychological import. They also have a thematic import intimately related to the psychological import. . . . What the visual style is trying to tell us is what the film itself is trying to say: style becomes thus synonymous with and inseparable from meaning. . . .[4]

Overlooking the fact that, while he claims "style" and "meaning" are inseparable, his language actually separates them (and overlooking the equally sticky problem of how "style," which he defines as visual, can be separated from "what the film itself is trying to say" when the essential fact of "the film itself" is that it narrates visually), Seydor makes the argument for the unity of form and content. But as he sets up his argument, what he terms the "manifest content" of the movie--apparently, its intellectual "meaning" that "tells" and "says" verbally what the movie is about--has priority. It becomes the "main text," while the cinematic "style," that is, what the images do and how they do it, becomes a "subtext." Even the compelling connection he goes on to make between cinematic action and theme,

> . . . the camera's restless exploration of new and increasing points of view, of piling perspective upon accumulating perspective until. . . [t]he sense of being crowded eventually becomes so oppressive that implosion leads to explosion, the inevitable consequence of which is violence,[5]

only takes the argument as far as generating "violence," and does not account for the Bunch's growth as moral individuals through and in relation to that violence, or for their--and the camera eye's--increasing powers of violent action (and every action is violent in that it entails an annihilation of energy in the creation of a new energy) as the movie unfolds.

Similar problems with conventional literary terminology also arise in assessments of Cable Hogue. One critic describes Peckinpah's move from The Wild Bunch to Cable as a "switch from tragedy to comedy."[6] Seydor, again much more on point than most critics, qualifies the dramatic sense of the two movies:

> In The Wild Bunch Peckinpah made a tragedy, but at the last moment he carried the structure toward the comic; in The Ballad [of Cable Hogue], by contrast, he has made a comedy, but at the very end he deflects the structure toward the tragic.[7]

Seydor is trying to see Cable Hogue in terms of "tragic optimism," R.W.B. Lewis' term for the ironic chord struck in nineteenth century America between "those who celebrate America's lack of a past as the firmest basis on which to secure its glorious future," and "those who bemoan America's lack of a past as the surest indication that it will repeat the mistakes of history."[8] Seydor would include Peckinpah among the middle group, the "tragic optimists," who are characterized, in Lewis' words,

> by a sense of the tragic collisions to which innocence was liable (something unthinkable among the hopeful), and equally by an awareness of the heightened perception and humanity which suffering made possible (something unthinkable among the nostalgic).[9]

Including Peckinpah in the "party of irony" would help explain, according to Seydor, how the end of Cable Hogue is not really tragic and not really

comic. It would explain why Cable does not get to ride off into the sunset with Hildy--such an ending would be "too good for true"--and why Cable dies. But, finally, Seydor concludes that "Cable's death and the manner of it" remain "problematic," and that "the problem is an integral part of the total effect" of the movie.[10] Finally, that is, he gives up.

There are a number of "problems" with Cable's death. For one thing, it does not happen, at least not visibly. Cable is alive in one shot, leaning back in his bed (which his friends have moved outside for him), listening to Josh give the mock eulogy Cable has requested. The next shot sees Josh orating against the sunlit sky. The next sees Josh from a slightly lower angle preaching against a night sky. In the space of a cut, Cable's image has gone; he has "died." Another problem is that his death does not appear particularly imminent when the final sequence begins--Seydor's comment that it has been carefully foreshadowed to the contrary. The sequence leading up to the death enacts a dizzying series of events that have no causal connection. Why does the first automobile appear? Why does Hildy appear at just this moment? Why does the death of the central figure appear no more or no less important than all these other sudden appearances? Moreover, Cable's dying is wholly untragic. He never suffers. In fact, he appears to be enjoying it. What is going on here? Is Peckinpah, in the words of Joseph Morgenstern, going "farther and farther into fantasy as he gets deeper and deeper into the literal problems of a resolution?"[11] Or is something else happening, something in the camera eye--which survives Cable's death and the departure of the other human images--something that talk

of dramatic structure and irony and fantasy cannot, in themselves, account for.

When the eye looks at a Peckinpah movie, it sees the "something else." It sees a power subtler than conventional critical language is accustomed to accounting for. Foremost, it sees action--and not simply action, but action in process. Those images that inexplicably appear in the final sequence of Cable Hogue do what images inherently do--they become visible. And becoming visible, they actualize the imaginative power in the camera eye. With each miraculous appearance, a new appearance becomes possible, and imaginative activity increases. As the creative power active in the camera eye comes forward, it dispenses with the old--in this case, with Cable's image which can no longer aid its advance. When Peckinpah images move, as they do in the final sequence of Cable Hogue, they move in a way that increases their power to act. This urge to grow and transform appears, too, in the trucks' images in Convoy. The movie begins with a single truck coming into view. Soon there are three trucks, then six, then too many to count. In the early parts of the movie, there is some explanation for how the trucks come together. Rubber Duck, Love Machine, and Spider Mike are friends. New truckers join the convoy because they have been listening on their CB radios and know "what's goin' down." But in the final phase, although only a handful of trucks join the Duck in the jailbreak episode, afterward, the entire convoy is back together again--suddenly, across the space of a cut. In The Wild Bunch, as well, images increase their power to grow and enact sudden transformations. In the aftermath of the final shootout--which itself is the outcome of a series

of amplifying images of explosion--the camera eye miraculously gives birth to Freddie's image. Wherever the eye looks in a Peckinpah movie, it discovers images in the process of undergoing and enacting transformation.

Nor are acts of transformation limited to the images of cars and trucks and explosions. The human images, whose stories center the camera eye's narrative action, emerge completely involved in change and are themselves agents of change. They are not "cursed with outdated codes" or "trapped between the old morality and the new."[12] If Cable were trapped between moralities, he could never forgive Bowen and imagine leaving the desert; and Pike could never imagine saving Angel. If Rubber Duck were "cursed with an outdated code," the convoy could never happen, and Lyle would never come to laugh at the end of the movie. Such pronouncements ignore the visible fact of process working in every Peckinpah image. They ignore the concrete evidence of the eye--whose genius is to see action. And they ignore the fact that Peckinpah's central human images are foremost invovled, with the camera eye, in a narrative advance whose outcome is a new species of morality.

This study seeks to disclose the new species of morality, the "something else," that the narrating camera eye creates--in The Wild Bunch, Cable Hogue, and Convoy--in its interaction with the moving color image. The new morality appears most prominently in the pattern of growth that emerges both within the movies, and from one to the next. This pattern, which takes the central human images of each movie through a three-part "moral advance" that includes a physical, an intellectual, and a moral or imaginative phase, is not a structure imposed upon the narrative, but an inherent process that arises with and in the

concrete relations visible in the movies' opening images. The concrete process of moral advance, happening in the images and through them, evolves the method, or the new creative morality, of Peckinpah's cinematic eye.

The trinary process further appears in the relations between the central human images within each movie. In The Wild Bunch, the relation between Pike, Deke, and Freddie figures centrally in the Bunch's growth. In Cable Hogue, Cable, Josh, and Hildy carry forward the movie's advance. And in Convoy, Rubber Duck, Melissa, and Lyle emerge as the central human relation that promotes transformation. The move from The Wild Bunch, through Cable Hogue, and into Convoy further reveals the working of Peckinpah's imaginative method. The Wild Bunch centers in the male group and is narrated primarily through the Bunch's physical moves. Cable Hogue brings forward the relationship between the male and female images of Cable and Hildy, and emphasizes Cable as the agent of the camera's narrative advance. As the single individual evolved out of the male group, Cable undergoes the process of forging his intellectual identity and his human worth. He begins Peckinpah's evolution of rational man out of physical man, and prepares for the birth, in Rubber Duck, of imaginative man. Convoy enacts Peckinpah's version of the birth of imaginative man,[13] and, in addition, shifts the narrative emphasis from the human agent to the imaginative power--the power inherent in "convoying"--that drives creative advance. Convoy brings front and center the new morality's method of creative transformation, and it illuminates the new universe of images that naturally issues from that method.

The creation of the new in these movies inevitably entails the destruction of the old, and consequently moral growth acts as well through what dies as through what lives. What dies is whatever inhibits the advance of the new--the Old World hierarchy of Agua Verde and Deke's method of reaction in The Wild Bunch; Cable's assertions of revenge and self; the forms that the voice of reason takes in Convoy. Foremost, what dies are modes of relating that seek to impose action and value from without--"old" moralities that do not arise naturally from within the autonomous image, moralities that can be characterized as "codes," and hence promote the abstraction inherent in words. In its largest dimensions, the birth of the new morality in Peckinpah's movies enacts the transformation from a morality of words to a morality of images, or from literary to cinematic art.

It is important to see in these movies that the central human figures do not wantonly destroy what opposes them, nor do they merely destroy what externally opposes them. They participate as well in destroying what limits from within their life as images. Consequently, in each movie, the old morality as it appears within each of the central human images--their characteristic identities and social connections in the world--dies. Moreover, nothing simply ends in Peckinpah's imagination. A dying always entails a transformation into something new and into a new way of seeing. Or, in other words, "the end" never makes an end in these movies, it "completes" in the etymological sense of coming to fullness. Peckinpah's moral method generates an art of beginnings, not an art of annihilation. While the violent movies may focus the annihilating act entailed in transformation, transformation always occurs.

And the other movies, those in which violence is not thematically up front, clearly focus his creative acts, the acts of giving birth and beginning anew.

Because of the new value that Peckinpah's movies promote, this study necessarily uses words in a new way. Most obviously, morality does not refer here to a prescribed code of belief or action; it refers to an inherent creative discipline or method that arises within the individual creature and enacts its growth. Morality in this sense derives from the word's etymological origin as a behavior or usage not imposed by law. This "new" sense of morality relates to the power of action in images and in life, and to the eye's genius for opening out into the world and involving the creature in moving forward. The new morality, imagined, gives birth to Peckinpah's new narrative art.

Centering, converging, and correlating refer to narrative acts of the eye in relation to images, and to the narrative acts of images in relation to one another. Centering expresses the eye's orientation within a field of action; it promotes value and the urge toward completion. The center of an image, or an image as a moving center, is not a locus, but a space-time event; etymologically, it is a "pricking point," a concentration of energies as they go forward. Converging enacts the "bending together," or mutual inclination of images as it leads into new action. Correlating promotes center-to-center relating between individuals. When images correlate, they enter a complementary union within which they exchange power and promote mutual creative advance.

Each phase of the trinary process of moral advance evolves a specific power of action. The physical phase promotes unitive action and the value of the body as an organic whole. The intellectual phase promotes the power of the intellect to "separate and decide." It values the tendency of reason to abstract itself from the physical world, and it favors causal and structural (or point-to-point) connections. Through it emerge ego and self, social function, and structure. The imaginative phase promotes the moral and creative drive within the creation. It values the narrative acts of images and of the camera eye, and it works to pass on creative power through successive transformations. All the powers are working all the time in the movies, but each has priority within its phase; and in its evolution, the moral process moves successively from the most rudimentary to the most subtle power.

This study, in its method, attempts to be completely empirical. It works with the concrete images of the movies and what they do. Its fundamental question is, "What do you see?" and it assumes that what cannot be seen is not there. The study does not seek to explicate the movies or say what they mean, but to show what they do and how they do it. It assumes that all features of the movies are active and important--their dramatic, historical, and mythic dimensions--but it gives overwhelming priority to their visual action. Since it approaches the movies as narrative art, and since the cinematic eye narrates, the study becomes concerned with the creative acts performed by and through the camera eye. In seeking to make visible the creative process of the camera eye, the study inevitably undergoes that process. And when it does its job well, when it literally sees the creative event, the study, moving together with the camera eye, narrates the new morality.

Notes

[1] David Denby, "Violence Enshrined," Atlantic Monthly, 229, No. 4 (Apr. 1972), p. 119.

[2] "Playboy Interview: Sam Peckinpah," Playboy, 19, No. 8 (Aug. 1972), p. 65.

[3] Stephen Farber, "Peckinpah's Return," Film Quarterly, 23, No. 1 (Fall 1969), p. 8.

[4] Paul Seydor, Peckinpah: The Western Films (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), p. 127.

[5] Seydor, p. 127.

[6] Tom Milne, rev. of The Ballad of Cable Hogue, Sight and Sound, 40, no. 1 (Winter 1970-71), p. 50.

[7] Seydor, p. 175.

[8] Seydor, p. 175.

[9] R.W.B. Lewis, The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 7-8.

[10] Seydor, p. 175.

[11] Quited in Seydor, p. 171.

[12] These comments appear in Aljean Harmetz, "Tough Guy of Movies Goes 'Soft,'" Sentinel Star, 12 Aug. 1977, Sec. B, p. 5-B, and in Milne, p. 50, respectively.

[13] For a discussion of Stanley Kubrick's version of this story, see W.R. Robinson, "The Birth of Imaginative Man in Part III of 2001: A Space Odyssey, unpublished manuscript.

CHAPTER ONE

BETWEEN WHAT IS IMMUTABLE AND FAILED: THE IMAGE EMERGES IN THE WILD BUNCH

> Change of values--that is a
> change of creators. Whoever must
> be a creator always annihilates.
> Nietzsche

The Camera Eye Gets Going: Cinematic Convergence in Starbuck

When Pike shoves the rail office clerk out into the main street of Starbuck, precipitating the movie's first shootout, a narrative convergence occurs. Bounty hunters open fire on the man from above. Simultaneously, a parade of townspeople--promoters of the South Texas Temperance Union who have been marching toward the rail office unaware of what is happening--enter the avenue between the Bunch, who are looking to escape, and the bounty hunters. The camera cuts to the passing marchers, pans with their motion, and centers in the image of a man whose eye turns to see the clerk fall. Then all hell breaks loose.

Convergence, etymologically a bending or inclining into unity, happens in this brief episode through Sam Peckinpah's genius, and that of the moving camera eye, for narrating in units of action. The camera eye converges into a single coherent action--the shootout--three actions whose relation to one another it has been evolving toward since the movie's opening shot. From the view of the human figures--Bunch, bounty hunters, marchers--their respective actions initially appear unrelated.

But when the camera sees the marcher's eye, the three discrete actions come together--physically in time and space, consciously and dramatically via the characters' sudden awareness of their new relation to one another, and imaginatively via the camera eye's tense cutting among "separate" actions that suddenly converge into a qualitatively new event, the shootout.

The Bunch burst into the street, guns blasting. Caught in the crossfire, people dash for cover. Blood erupts into the light and bodies recoil from the impact of bullets. At the same time, cinematic action intensifies. Rapid-fire cutting fragments the continuous succession of images and alternates between "real" time and slow motion. The momentary unity of action achieved through the camera's convergence of the three actions appears to be exploding in all directions. Moreover, the Bunch's unity as a group disintegrates. Separated from one another during the frenzied moments of gunfire, each man on his own trying to get away, all the cohesiveness the Bunch displayed in their ride into town and in the early moments of the robbery appears to be falling apart.

And yet, despite the tendency toward disjunction that emerges in the shootout, despite the killing and the fragmenting montage, convergent activity persists. In the midst of the mayhem a bounty hunter--Deke Thornton--takes aim at Pike from the roof. Pike looks up as Deke's shot misses. United in eye contact through the camera's cross-cutting, the two men exchange looks; something more than a bullet passes between them. Moreover, the Bunch--what is left of them--regroup at the edge of town. Pike calls to his men, "Let's go!" United again by Pike's command, the Bunch, like the camera eye, achieve convergence.

What the shootout and its aftermath show is that in The Wild Bunch and within the Bunch, narrative unity is accomplished at great expense and through violent action. The camera eye, together with the Bunch, shoots out of Starbuck. In fact, "shooting out" is its primary narrative act, the imaginative form that convergence takes in the movie. "Shooting out" narrates the Bunch's explosive action out of the center of town and into the increased powers of unity and action they possess as they ride away. "Shooting out" aligns their images with the camera's genius for converging and transforming images, and it centrally involves them--as the movie's central images, its moving center--in the cinematic eye's creative advance, an advance initiated in the movie's opening shot.[1]

Photographic vs. Cinematic: The Cinematic Eye Centers

The Wild Bunch begins with a high-contrast black and white photograph that renders the image, a group of men on horseback, in stark outline. When the photograph bursts into color and life, the men appear riding into center screen, their images and features particularized. In the cut from black and white to color, the camera "shoots out" of the static, abstract, photographic medium and gives birth to the livelier moving color image. This cut enacts the movie's first violent convergence; it conjoins conflicting narrative modes into a complete narrative event.[2]

Furthermore, the image that appears in the opening shot is not named. Although the movie's title appears in the next black and white freeze-frame to identify the men and the movie as "The Wild Bunch," in its visual beginning the movie values imaginative action over character and identity. Even when the Bunch are named, their images continue to

frustrate the urge to know who they are. They ride into Starbuck wearing army uniforms, and if they are a "wild" bunch of outlaws, that fact of character is not readily apparent in their images.[3]

Following the opening move from photographic to cinematic image, the camera eye pans away from the Bunch's central moving image. As it does so, the image freezes into black and white, and the movie's title comes into view. When the camera pans back to center again on the Bunch's images, it abandons the title and discovers anew the moving color image. This alternation between photographic and cinematic images occurs throughout the movie's credit sequence in which the identifying words of the credits are always associated with the still photograph. The succession of visual modes evinces the disjunction between them, at the same time that the camera eye's ability to move successively--through the violent cut--converges the competing modes.

In addition, the camera's interest in centering promotes the narrative act of convergence. Centering occurs initially in the camera eye's opening look at the Bunch's images which fill center screen. As the sequence unfolds, the camera cuts to Pike, the central figure in the Bunch. As the credits intrude on the moving color image, stopping its motion and draining its color, the camera moves to find the center once again within the cinematic images. In the movie's beginning shots, centering unites the cinematic imagination with the Bunch's images and prepares for convergence.

Despite the camera's centering activity, however, and despite its beginning impulse to converge with images, the credit sequence overwhelmingly narrates disjunction. Not only do the black and white and color shots successively alter the immediate power of the images they

enact, they generate conflicting narrative modes. Resembling old newspaper photographs, the black and white images connect the Bunch and their story with history and promote the camera as a witness that documents the past. By freezing time, they invite reflection as the primary method of relating to them. And in their visual association with the words of the credits, as well as in their documentary quality, they subject images to a verbal authority whose function is to explain or mediate what the eye sees.

In contrast, the moving color images advance an imaginative rather than a documentary view of the past. Peckinpah's interest is in narrating a story of the old west through the medium of the movies, not in documenting some truth about the past or representing it. And while this story occurs within a western setting, it is not a story about the "old" at all, but a story of and in the "new." In this moral urge to imagine the past, to bring a historic era into narrative life, Peckinpah's imagination displays its inherent method of convergence.[4] Further, the cinematic medium, in which moving is central, involves the eye in looking forward; there is no time in the movie for reflecting as a primary or leading act. But as the violence of the shootout shows, disjunction occurs within the cinematic narrative as well, even as it emerges in the credit sequence.

The story enacted from the opening shot through the final credit brings into view the three discrete actions that converge in the shootout. These three actions--the robbery, the march, the ambush--introduce dramatic conditions in order to account for the shootout, and concomitantly, involve the Bunch in a drama that, in part, stems from their past. In addition, the story narrated through the credit sequence

begins to clarify the Bunch's character as killers. While the movie's title suggests that they are a "wild" bunch acting outside of and thus in conflict with the conventional and civilized order promoted by the temperance marchers, the last credit--in which Pike announces the hold-up--makes their antagonistic character an open and visible fact. Furthermore, the camera during the credit sequence comes to center on the movie's first explicitly violent image.

Penetrating Ants and Scorpions: The Cinematic Eye Sees the Life in Violent Action

As the Bunch ride into town, they encounter a circle of children who are engaged in some sort of game. Centering first on Pike in close-up, the camera then cuts to a close-up of the children looking at Pike. The camera's act of centering joins Pike and the children in eye contact. Panning the laughing faces of the children, the camera moves closer to discover the game they play. The children drop three white scorpions into a stick cage swarming with red ants.

The image of ants and scorpions--which continues to appear throughout the credit sequence intercut with the three main actions, and which shows up again after the shootout as the final shot of the Starbuck episode--introduces the movie's thematic relation to violence.[5] Foremost, however, the children's pleasure in this particular game brings forward violent action as a raw creative drive, as a power moving at the center of imaginative life. The image of ants and scorpions originates within the children's active, but morally unevolved imaginations.

The camera eye, moreover, comes to the violent image through a cinematic or narrative act. It centers first on Pike--who therein becomes central to the Bunch and their story--then on the children, then

on the ants and scorpions. In penetrating the visual exchange between Pike and the children, the camera extends the power in centering as a narrative act. The cinematic imagination nourishes its own creative drives through penetration and discovers in the image of ants and scorpions its own source in the violent activity that promotes narrative advance.[6] Appropriately, this image becomes the imaginative center of the Starbuck sequence and, as the last image in that sequence, performs the cinematic transformation into the movie's next episode.

But along with its creative and cinematic value, the image of ants and scorpions introduces another feature of violence into the movie. For one thing, the children's game is willed as well as imagined. By confining the scorpions within the cage, the children force upon them an antagonistic and unnatural competition, one that metaphorically renders the Bunch's relation to Starbuck's human society. Ants and scorpions promote radically different methods of life. The singly potent scorpion, far stronger than the individual ant, cannot, however, when confined within a limited space, compete against the ants' social drives. Similarly, the deadly sting of the Bunch may prevail in Starbuck, but the social enterprise of the townspeople is in fact the more evolutionarily advanced method for narrating human life.[7] Pike knows this when he later says that "the days when a man can live by his gun are fadin' fast." Visually, too, the clutter of ant and scorpion bodies in the frame prepares for the shootout and for later scenes in Agua Verde where the Bunch move within an increasingly diminishing space overrun with people.[8]

The metaphoric value of the ants/scorpion image also contributes to the dramatic dilemma in which the Bunch are becoming enmeshed as

characters. By previewing their tragic end, the ant/scorpion metaphor symbolically subjects them to a fate, and to the narrative counterpart of fate--plot.[9] By introducing a possible fate for the Bunch, the ants/scorpion metaphor diminishes their potentiality as moving images, as well as its own potential as an image for change, and, consequently, it assists the photographic medium of the credit sequence whose prime narrative value entails stopping the moving color image. Moreover, the thematic appearance of violence in the image of ants and scorpions, together with the narrative violence already visible in the competition between photographic and cinematic modes, discloses a fundamental disjunction working in Peckinpah's imagination in The Wild Bunch, and promotes the value in violent action for "shooting out" of that disjunction.[10]

Insofar as the image of ants and scorpions evokes metaphor, a specifically literary form of narrating, it promotes dramatic ends and the Bunch's limitation in character--a limitation which, as the credit sequence moves to completion, becomes more definite. In the last shots of that sequence, the Bunch stride into the rail office. Pike grabs the clerk and snarls to his men, "If they move, kill 'em." The final shot, a super close-up of Pike's face, freezes into black and white, and the words, "Directed by Sam Peckinpah," appear on the screen.

In the close-up command, the Bunch's characters as killers, and Pike's character as their "head" man or leader (Pike is literally shot as a head), come into view. As "head" of the Bunch, Pike directs them in their attack on Starbuck. Moreover, Pike's verbal command, which in substance and form negates the cinematic medium that gives him and the Bunch life as moving images--and which is his most explicitly violent statement in the movie--attaches to the appearance of "Sam

Peckinpah" in his character as director and as a literal character, the series of ciphers that constitutes his name. The shot joining Pike's frozen image and Peckinpah's name credits the disjunctive forces in the movie, those that must be shot out of, to both Pike and Peckinpah as "head" men--men who seek to intellectually direct the life in images.

For Pike, the shootout gets him and the Bunch free from the bind his command has gotten them into in Starbuck, and it is the means of forging a new unity within the Bunch. For Peckinpah's imagination, cutting becomes the creative violence that sets him free, that gets the movie going out of the credit sequence and that gets the action going in the shootout. Cutting emerges in The Wild Bunch as a cinematic violence that counteracts Peckinpah's tendency to do intellectual violence to images--that intellectual violence concretely enacted by the photographic medium and its association with words (whose tendency is to re-present images), and further enacted by the metaphoric character of the ants/scorpion image.[11]

Fueled by the fundamental narrative conflict between competing methods of narration introduced through the credit sequence, the Bunch and the camera eye gone "wild" together shoot their way beyond the disjunctive relations fostered by head-directed violence. As the Bunch move to the outskirts of town and Pike calls, "Let's go," those disjunctive relations begin to converge in the Bunch's new unity. And the camera turns again to the children who now set fire to the cage of ants and dying scorpions. Through this new penetration of the ants/scorpion image, the gunfire of the shootout issues into scorpion fire; violent action becomes the generative action of the children's imaginative violence. The scorpion fire inverts the process from black and white to

color that begins the movie. Its red flame burns the cage to black and white ash. More important, the shift from flame to ash occurs naturally within the cinematic image, without the further violence of cutting that makes the change during the credit sequence.

With the transformation from gunfire to scorpion fire, the image--and Peckinpah's imagination--takes into itself the divisive powers of the photographic mode and turns them into a cinematic advance. For the flame does not simply burn away the cage; it burns away the image of the cage to reveal a new image immanent within it. Immediately, that image is the next scene in Starbuck. But there is, moreover, a new power at large--the power of unitive action forged in the shootout's convergent activity that enables the new Bunch and the camera eye to move forward in their moral advance.

The Camera Eye Flashes Back; Narrative Disjunction in Deke's Method of Law

The shootout, in imaginatively exploding the disjunctive elements that converge within it, opens out the narrative to the new possibilities inherent in the scorpion fire. And the scorpion fire, by bringing the black and white medium into the cinematic narrative, completes the first phase in the story of the camera eye,[12] a phase whose moral feat entails converging the disunities that emerge in the beginning sequence so that the movie itself can be actually narrated.[13] In the camera eye's new phase, the central event becomes the Bunch's moral adventure.

Structurally, the camera's new phase transforms the narrative disjunctions exploded in the Starbuck shootout into the two primary actions that make up the inside and outside stories of the Bunch. The inside

story entails the Bunch's inner-relations as a group, their efforts to extend and evolve their powers of unitive action. The outside story entails the Bunch's physical moves deeper into Mexico to escape Deke Thornton and the bounty hunters. This story, of the Bunch's external movement, ensnares them in a flight-and-pursuit plot which their images must continually outrun or shoot out of. Moving together, the inside and outside actions converge in the Bunch's moral adventure.

When the scorpion fire dissolves into the scene in Starbuck--the shootout's aftermath--disjunctive power becomes dramatically focused in Deke Thornton's dilemma and in the method of law he is forced to represent. Deke views the destruction in Starbuck and the blood-thirsty bounty hunters, whom he must lead in search of the Bunch, with disgust. Furthermore, he argues outright with Harrigan, the railroad man who has planned the ambush and who has gotten Deke, Pike's former partner, out of jail expressly to gun down the Bunch. Harrigan issues an ultimatum: that Deke has thirty days to find the Bunch or "it's back to Yuma," that is, back to prison. As Harrigan's words fade, a flash-back of Deke being whipped dissolves in, superimposed over Deke's present image.

The flashback brings into visibility what drives Deke and the method of law that Harrigan claims to "represent."[14] It reveals the law as an externally imposed (literally "super" imposed) power over the individual--and over his image--and particularly as a power of the past over the present. To represent is to re-present, to repeat what has already been present; it is to deal with and in the past. The men of law in the movie--Harrigan, Deke, the bounty hunters, and later, the

U.S. Army--promote a representative method, a method that focuses on the past. Consequently, their powers of action are limited to reacting to the moves the Bunch initiate. They are always a step behind the breaking moral adventure. The method of reaction rules over the birth of Deke's image. Before the ambush, he is seen with his head bent forward on his chest, his brimmed hat completely blocking his face from view. A voice, Harrigan's, yells, "Thornton!" Deke looks up so that the camera eye sees his face. Deke's visual birth occurs in reaction to verbal authority, and for most of the movie, he promotes that authority.

In addition, Deke's role as an authority over the bounty hunters contrasts with Pike's authority within the Bunch. Deke obviously dislikes the men with whom Harrigan forces him to work; he merely fills a slot in a structure that, for him, has no intrinsic value. Pike, on the other hand, is an integral part of an organic unit. While the scene in camp following the shootout reveals dissension within the Bunch, their adventures resolve their internal conflicts and bring them into greater unity and moral coherence. Moreover, the difference between Pike's and Deke's methods as members of a group comes to be the issue that morally unites the two of them, and that makes Deke see the Bunch's value and wish he were with them.

Freddie's Regenerative Laughter
The Camera Eye Turns in to the Center

In the scene that opens after Deke's argument with Harrigan, the camera eye centers on an old man who chuckles to a Mexican baby held on its mother's lap. Then it zooms out to reveal a circular, fenced-in compound, at the center of which is a stone-tiered hearth. Two children lean against the fence watching some riders approach. The

old man sees and moves toward the riders as they enter the compound. This place is the Bunch's hideout.

The camera eye's initial look at Freddie, the old man, together with the physical layout of the scene, emphasizes centering as the primary narrative act of this sequence, and promotes Freddie as an agent of centering. Moreover, through his relation with the infant and through his laughter--which associates him with the scorpion-fire children--Freddie emerges as an image aligned with the powers of new life. In fact, Freddie's function within the Bunch is to provide food and fresh horses--those supplies that regenerate the Bunch's bodily energies and enable them to physically move. But in this scene, wherein the first major internal challenge to the Bunch's unity as a physical body occurs,[15] it is Freddie's power of moral centering that regenerates the Bunch and gives it new life.

When the Bunch enter camp, they naturally move to its center and deposit the sacks of gold from their heist beside the hearth. The gold, embodying value that is extrinsic to the Bunch, becomes the focal point of their first argument. The Gorch brothers--Lyle and Tector--want a bigger share of the gold to open their own territory. In particular, they resent having to share the money equally with Freddie, the oldest, and with Angel, the youngest member of the Bunch. On both counts--in their desire to leave the Bunch and in their volatile bickering with Angel which nearly results in a mini-shootout--Lyle and Tector threaten the physical unity of the Bunch.

Although the Gorches aim to draw their guns on Angel, their attack is as much directed against Pike as the "head" of the group; it challenges his authority. Pike responds with an assertion--"I'll lead

this Bunch or end it now"--and the other men back him up. Freddie, Dutch, and Angel draw their guns on the Gorches. For them, who see themselves as the Bunch and value their unity, the center holds through Pike's ability to lead. However, when the men open the sacks of gold, a new threat emerges. In the sacks they discover not gold, but "silver rings" that are in fact steel washers. And this new fact, coming from Pike's failure to lead--specifically from his failure to foresee the ambush and the switch--more thoroughly than the Gorches' dissension endangers the Bunch's unity. Momentarily, the Bunch, somewhat like the washers, are without a center, that is, without a central moral force to bind them. Pike's authority, around which the previous rupture coalesced, disintegrates in the realization, voiced by Lyle, that all Pike's "fancy planning'" has gotten them nowhere. Into and out of this apparent moral vacuum erupts Freddie's laughter.

A physically explosive event--the sound literally bursts out of him--Freddie's laughing issues from an immediate perception of the humor in the Bunch's Starbuck performance. And it enacts an occasion of "shooting out." Impatient with Pike's analytical attempt to understand what happened, Freddie imagines the scene--the Bunch, "big tough ones," riding into town with everything under control, and riding out swindled. By enabling the Bunch to see themselves in a new light, Freddie's laughter shoots them out of the tension that threatens to divide them. The regenerative power in Freddie's laughter, like Pike's "Let's go," centers and unifies the Bunch, and it illuminates the good in them.

Appropriately, Freddie, the agent of humor and new life, becomes central to the Bunch's internal struggle for unity. Initially an

activity of the camera eye in the scene's opening shot, centering becomes an activity of moral individuals. Joined in laughing, the lighter form which "shooting out" takes in the Bunch's advance, the Bunch correlate--they relate center-to-center. The new value accorded the Bunch through Freddie's regenerative humor also becomes cinematically active in the individual close-up shots of their laughing faces. The Bunch are becoming individuals, not just killers.

The Cinematic Eye Penetrates Pike's Image

The moral impulse within the Bunch, the urge toward unity and toward the center-to-center relating of individuals, emerges in the camp scene through Freddie's good humor. In advancing the perception of value and the spirit of humor, Freddie's method, for the moment, heals the split dramatically posed by Lyle and Tector, and it advances the inside story of the Bunch. The next scene--wherein the Bunch prepare for sleep around the evening campfire--further evolves the unity of individuals given impetus through Freddie. Moreover, together with the trail scene the following morning, it evinces a more subtle view of the physical disjunctions that the Bunch must unify.

As the camera opens to the evening scene, Angel serenades a Mexican woman and her children. Freddie busies himself making coffee. These simple acts bring forward the sense of quiet communion that pervades the evening sequence and that extends to the conversation between Pike and Dutch. Whereas earlier, the Bunch actively fought disintegration, the disjunctive urge to fall apart, Pike and Dutch introduce reflection as an activity within the Bunch's moral healing. Unlike the method of law, for which reflection, with its inherent tendency to divide, is the

primary mode of action, Pike's and Dutch's reflecting occurs within a unifying or narrative process.

Appropriate to the method of reflection, which etymologically means to "bend back," the two men discuss their shared past and their character as outlaws.[16] They evoke a sense of the Bunch's mutability--their awareness of individual aging, as well as their recognition that the outlaw life is "fadin' fast." Pike, moreover, turns reflection on the past into an impulsion toward future acts. His desire for "one more good score" reveals his urge to "live well," that is, to live beyond the mere maintenance of life entailed in the physical escape from Starbuck and in the Gorches' attack on the "body" of the Bunch. It reveals his urge "to be alive in a satisfactory way."[17]

The camera, too, reflects when it looks "back" on the trail to Deke Thornton, who, with the bounty hunters, has been following the Bunch. Intercut with the scene in the Bunch's camp, Deke's image in relation to the scruffy bounty hunters clarifies the growing coherence within the Bunch, especially as it appears in the interaction between Pike and Dutch. Deke demonstrates moral isolation from the men he is forced to command. The match-cuts between him and Pike, however, join him morally with Pike. Deke's dissatisfaction with his function as a representative of the law, together with his increasing identification with the Bunch, constitute his moral urge toward "living well."

In the phase of the Bunch's adventure that emphasizes uniting the disjunctive powers within them and achieving coherence and continuity as a body, the urge toward living well emerges as a novel impulsion. Pike, who first expresses it, does so first in this particular scene. Further-

more, it emerges as an imaginative impulse toward novelty that entails the visual and cinematic value of looking out ahead. In the morning sequence, which enacts the final assault from within the Bunch on their life as a body, the genial urge to live well--or, in Freddie's method, the urge toward new, regenerate life--becomes clarified as a cinematic value through the convergence of Pike's image with the creative vigor of the camera eye.

The final inside assault on the Bunch's life as a physical event comes, again, from the Gorches. As the Bunch ride into the desert, Freddie tangles the lines of the horses that he is leading and the entire entourage, men and animals (except for Angel who afterward miraculously appears smiling and untouched at the top of the hill), tumbles in slow motion down a sand dune. For the camera eye, this is a moment of playful, even graceful movement. But for the Bunch it is an awkward moment, and for Tector a moment occasioned by Freddie's age and incompetence. Tector turns on the old man and would kill him were it not for Pike's intervention.

For Pike, the Bunch's unity in this moment depends upon its ability to value the individual:

> When you side with a man you stay with him and if you can't do that, you're like some kind of animal. You're finished. We're all finished.

Standing eyeball-to-eyeball with Tector, Pike demonstrates not only in his words, but through them--through the fact that he uses words here instead of a gun--that he is morally advanced beyond the physical, "animalistic" Gorches. In articulating the abstract principle or code of action that values individuals, Pike as killer gives way to Pike as man animated by the force of his character. Moreover, it is important

and necessary to the Bunch's advance that Pike's character as a human individual assert itself. A feature within the moral process underway, character--dramatically enacted through will, through ego, through motives and desires, through memory, and through language--must be lived through so that Pike and the Bunch can live up to the cinematic value in their images.

Pike's character comes together with the physical failing against which the Bunch struggle when he falls from his horse. His infirmity, a leg wound, focuses his body's limitation in time. As an old wound, it occasions a failure to heal and regenerate, and thus exacerbates the Bunch's immediate dilemma. Moreover, it focuses the limits of the body, of the physical and corporeal modes of action within a medium of images. In agony, Pike rises, heaves himself into the saddle, and slowly rides away from the Bunch. His effort clearly moves Dutch and the other men. Silently, they watch him ride into the desert. As their eyes turn to see him go, the camera moves with their line of vision and comes to center in Pike's singular image.

Implicit in the visual relation between Pike and the Bunch is the moral dictum, "Let's go." Pike's image unifies the Bunch not through a command, but through a visual and moral act aimed at accomplishing the good of "staying with a man," and therein holding together as a Bunch. Moreover, unity extends into the camera's union with Pike's image. Centering the moral impulse to "live well," Pike moves forward and looks out ahead; in doing so, he performs a cinematic feat that aligns his good with the creative vigor of the camera eye. Through seeing Pike's singular image move into the light of the desert, the camera eye evolves his human value beyond the restrictions of his character. It gives him

immediate power as an image. And in allowing Pike to become morally active as an image, the camera eye reveals its own story as one of growth and transformation.

The Bunch and the Camera Eye Enter the Old World

In penetrating Pike's image and discovering through it a source of cinematic value, the camera eye renders a moral and creative power in the Bunch's advance that they themselves do not see. Peckinpah visualizes them in a way their characters do not justify. He sees in them a power for transition and for moral action that exceeds their limitations. Pike's lone image centers that power and centers Peckinpah's interest in advancing it. The next sequence, the interlude in Angel's village, grows out of that interest, and it allows the Bunch to dimly see the moral and imaginative prospects that Peckinpah sees in them.

Narratively, the village sequence becomes possible through the camera's new vision of Pike. At the heart of the camera's turning in to the Bunch's centering or nuclear powers--a turn that begins in Peckinpah's simple interest in narrating their story and works through their opening images, the Starbuck sequence, and the internal struggle for unity--Pike's image allows a new vision of the Bunch to emerge in the village. They enter in unity and they leave morally transformed. The villagers are interested in the novelty of the Bunch, and the Bunch, in turn, enter into village life. Freddie's method, enacted through laughter, celebration, and an abundance of children's images, animates the sequence.

Division, as it attaches to the Gorches from within the Bunch and to Deke from outside the Bunch, does not figure into this scene.

However, a new division emerges in the contrast between Old and New Worlds. Dominated by the order of family and place--an order articulated in Angel's exclamation of loyalty to his land and his people--the Mexican village introduces an Old World European hierarchy that becomes more pronounced in Mapache's military organization. Moreover, the method of the Old World imagination takes two forms: the Old Mexican's story of the village in which he characterizes its pastoral way of life in terms of "the years of sadness," and Angel's desire for revenge.

The central dramatic event in the episode occurs when Angel learns that federales have attacked the village and murdered his father, and that his woman, "drunk with wine and love," has run off with the murdering General Mapache. Angel reacts by demanding Mapache's name--a "name enough" on which to hang his revenge. By focusing his interest on what he cannot see, on his father's murder and Teresa's betrayal, Angel mediates his vision. A creature of mind and of abstract ideals, Angel lives up to the value of mediation inherent in his name. Later, in Agua Verde, Angel will act on principle and shoot Teresa as she sits on Mapache's lap, but he will do so by ignoring the visual fact that he is surrounded by hundreds of Mapache's soldiers. And, in the end, his loyalty to abstraction and the Old World will bring about his deterioration and death as an image--make of him not a creature of light, and hence a hero for the movie, but an Angel of death.

As a reaction to events rather than a constructive act, Angel's revenge is linked with the representational method of law earlier associated with Harrigan, Thornton, and the bounty hunters. For all of them, past acts dominate immediate action. Further, Angel's frame of

mind endangers the new unity of the Bunch. Seeing the danger, Pike assumes his authoritative function and tells Angel to "learn to live with it" or quit the Bunch. Pike sees that Angel's revenge, as a way of getting on in the world, is no good, that is, that it cannot engender moral advance. This difference, between the American and the Mexican, between the New World and Old World imaginations, becomes the main form that division takes in the next phases of the Bunch's adventure.

The Old World morality further emerges in the tales of the Old Mexican, who, as the prominent male in the village, appears as its patriarch. While he does not speak of revenge against the federales, his story of "the years of sadness" likewise looks to the past, specifically to the Old World's mythic past. As a teller of the Old World's "tale," the Old Mexican discloses the Old World mythos of lost innocence. When he remarks to Pike that "we all wish to be children again," he makes clear his sense of loss and his urge to return to an earlier, simpler time. Through the Old Mexican's tale, the village scene--whose verdant color visually distinguishes it from the blues and browns of the Starbuck and camp scenes--becomes a green world, an Edenic garden in which children play in pure waters. His words overlay the scene with symbolic value and attempt to mediate between the images and the camera eye. Moreover, Angel's cry for "Mapache!" rears the head of death in the idyllic village and makes of it a fallen world naturally given to "sadness." But more meets the eye than the Old Mexican's words allow. The mythic tale and the call for vengeance give way to the regenerative energies of the ritual community which fosters the Bunch's moral coherence in the world and completes their initial drive for unity.

The Bunch and the Ritual Female: Transforming within the Green World

When the Bunch enter the village, the camera cuts to the faces of children, women, and old men who peer at them from behind doorways. For the villagers, the Bunch are primarily a visual event. Their novel images interest the villagers. Of particular interest is the fact that, except for Freddie, the members of the Bunch are all males in their prime, and their virility injects the new possibility of actual physical regeneration into a community that has lost its sexually potent males to the federales' guns. The older women are without husbands, and the younger ones without lovers. In a rude way, Lyle's request that Angel introduce him to his sister ("and ya mama and ya granmama, too, sonny") focuses the sexuality that much more subtly charges the episode. Also, Angel's passion and the Old Mexican's story of Teresa falling like an overripe mango into Mapache's hands, and of her "drunk with wine and love," promote the Bunch's first major encounter with the female image.

Moreso than the women of Starbuck, whose angular, darkly-clad figures appeared involved in social affairs (banking, attending the temperance meeting), the Mexican women bring forward the physical value of the female. They wear light-colored, loosely fitting clothes that accentuate the soft curves of their bodies. Their ample forms suggest the weight of flesh and its fecundity. Visually, the women are peripheral to the sequence. As the men talk in center screen and the revenge drama unfolds, female images move in the background preparing food and carrying on the life of the village. But in sustaining the physical life of the village through their activity and their reproductive potential, and in making possible the evening's celebration,

the women embody the village's powers of ritual renewal, which, in the leave-taking sequence, extends into a new vision of the Bunch.

For all the episode's sexual energy, however, no overtly sexual activity occurs. The Gorches, who do meet Angel's sister, are charmed by her youth and beauty; they in fact become children again, playing with her a child's string game. Nor do Pike or Dutch seek out women with whom to make love. The Bunch's interaction with the females of the village happens entirely through the camera's visual alignment of their images and through ritual activity. The Bunch pair off with women only in the evening festivities wherein the union of male and female becomes stylized through the formal moves of dancing. Of narrative interest to the camera eye is not the actual physical coupling of male and female bodies, but the new moral power that the Bunch acquire through their imaginative relation with the communal body whose regenerative energies center in the female.

The interaction between Bunch and villagers, which begins with the Mexicans' visual curiosity as the Bunch enter the village, completes in the morning when the Bunch ride out. The villagers line a tree-canopied path through which the Bunch exit. As they leave, the villagers solemnly sing to them and wave good-by. A woman hands Dutch a rose; Angel's sister brings Lyle a sombrero; and Angel's mother, making the sign of the cross over her son, places a small bundle in his hands. Visibly moved by the village's outpouring of love and honor, Pike and Dutch look at each other and at the people they pass. In the sequence's last shot, the men ride forward into the dark green forest, the backs of their figures only dimly seen through the leaf-filtered light.

The Bunch are loved and honored as images and as agents of the village's ritual regeneration. They have performed no deeds, made no promises to assist the villagers. Their accomplishment is their participation in the life of the village and the gift of their male images to its ritual body, a gift literally returned in the women's gifts to them. The Bunch carry with them into their next phase of growth the power of an actual green world--not the mediated green world refined through the Old Mexican's mythic tale, but an alive, visibly creative world wherein the color green, radiant in the vegetation that surrounds them, assists in the cinematic photosynthesis of the Bunch's images. The people's loving vision of the Bunch thus extends the camera's vision of Pike's singular image, and it looks forward to the new value that the Bunch's images acquire in the movie's closing shots.

The Bunch and the Red Automobile Penetrate Agua Verde

In bringing the Bunch's images into alignment with the imaginative drives of the ritual community, the village sequence completes the first, physical phase of the Bunch's advance. In introducing the ritual and mythic forms of the Old World story, the sequence prepares for the appearance in Agua Verde of the Old World's more potent modern form--that of the political and military order headed by Mapache. Angel's insistence on revenge--expressed emotionally in relation to Teresa and ideologically in relation to the peasant revolution--reinforces the division between Old and New World perspectives within the Bunch, and poses the primary threat to unity in their new phase. As a whole, the Bunch face and learn to work with the amassed powers of abstraction whose structures--in the visual form of the buildings of Agua Verde and the appearance of machines; in the intellectual form of the political

hierarchy; and in the narrative forms of character and plot--emerge as dominant features of the Agua Verde sequence. The Bunch's advance entails their assimilating the rational power imaged in Agua Verde's structures, and shooting out of it, when necessary, in their drive to live well.

The camera eye opens into the sequence through a close-up shot of a mother and child. As in the earlier shot of Freddie interacting with mother and baby, this shot reveals the presence of new life active in the camera's narrating. However, this baby nurses at a breast crossed by a bandolier. The source of nourishment for new life is marked by the gunbelt's linear structure and the potential for explosive violence which it contains. From the close-up, the camera zooms out to see Agua Verde dusty and brown (there is no "green water" visible), framed by buildings and wall, and filled with people, most of whom carry guns. The arboreal village has given way to the urban, militarized town visually dominated by the buildings' geometrical shapes. The celebratory rituals and mythic tales of the village have passed into the political structures of modern life.

The Bunch begin their new phase already active in Agua Verde. The camera does not see them ride into town as it does in the Starbuck and village episodes. Rather, they first appear walking in the midst of the town's activity, looking and being looked at. As novel images, the Bunch inject new value into Agua Verde. They enter as a cohesive and organically unified group. Their dress and their manner of movement--in contrast to the rigidly uniform dress and motion of the soldiers--does not indicate rank. Moreover, the Bunch's obviously American clothes distinguish them as outsiders. What arose as a fact of character in

Starbuck--the fact of their being outlaws, and a fact they disguised by putting on the costume of the law--becomes in Agua Verde a visible fact, one that promotes their value rather than their character as outlaws. In Agua Verde, the Bunch emerge foremost as Americans and New Worlders who move outside the Old World's law. Through their value as outlaws, they promote the American value implicit in the frontier. They move outside the law and outside convention; they do not represent their government, but through "enjoy[ing] an original relationship to the universe,"[17] they introduce into the Old World the New World imagination.

Promoting, as New Worlders, the novel power in images, the Bunch become morally aligned with the camera eye's next act. Cutting to a shot of the town gate, the cinematic imagination gives birth to Agua Verde's most novel image. The gate bursts open and through it an automobile, gleaming red and chrome, drives straight into the center of town. In it ride General Mapache, his German advisors and his lieutenants. When the car stops and the passengers get out, Pike and the Bunch move toward its colorful image. More than any sight in the town, the red car radiates the value of new, imaginative life. A feat of engineering, its structure embodies and converges the highest attainment in Agua Verde of rational methodology, and it brings the Bunch visibly face to face with the modern era that threatens their way of life. It is, moreover, an aesthetic and moral event. His imagination fired by the sight of the car, Pike relates to its engine, its center of power: engines like this one, he has heard, will be used in war to power airplanes. Pike's response to the car, the fact that he does not fear or dislike or ignore it, reveals his ability to imaginatively assimilate the rational and aesthetic powers the car's image projects. In his eye,

the machine becomes an occasion for adapting new energies for his and the Bunch's growth--energies they will need to make use of in their dealings with Mapache.

The automobile's miraculous appearance in Agua Verde, its visual novelty and bright color, disclose the narrative drive of the movie within a phase of the Bunch's advance that primarily calls upon their intellectual acumen, their ability to conceive a plan--the train robbery--and carry it through. It reveals a story beyond the conventional narrative structures of character and plot, a story narrated through the camera eye's visual acts of centering and convergence. The car's image narratively centers a new power, the rational power of structuring, and implants that power within the Bunch's moral advance. Moreover, it evolves the camera eye's power to "shoot out," and allows that a subtler power than structure moves the Bunch through Agua Verde.

Pike Sees the Moral Female; Angel Deconstructs

When the Bunch take seats at a table in the open square, they move from being new observers of life in Agua Verde toward becoming active participants in its life. Mexicans sit all around them, and at the top of the terraced square, overlooking the scene below, sit Mapache and his henchmen. While the masculine order presides over events in the town, the scene's first dramatic encounter centers in the Bunch's interaction with a woman, specifically, in Angel's interaction with Teresa. Before Teresa appears, however, Pike sees and catches the eye of a young woman who sits near him. Pike's obvious interest and the woman's smile, together with the camera's close-up cutting from one to the other, allow for a new possibility of center-to-center union for Pike and the female image.

Crucial to the Bunch's limitations, and built into their masculine character, is the subordination of female value. Except for the episode in Angel's village, wherein the relation between male and female occurs via formal ritual, no complementary images of the central members of the Bunch with females have appeared. In looking at one another, however, Pike and the young woman promote a visual and imaginative method of relating male and female. Their actions express interest, not dominance. Moreover, the young woman projects a new image of the female. Synthesizing the angular and voluptuous figures, respectively, of the Starbuck and village women, she appears foremost as a creature of the eye. Angularity in her image, unlike that in the Starbuck temperance women, promotes visual definition of her features, not abstraction. Her thinner form, in contrast with that of the village women, values not the substance and mass of flesh, but the light and radiant surface of skin. She extends female power beyond that of mere reproduction into a transforming potency that does not become fully manifest until she appears again as the whore with whom Pike stays in the movie's moral phase. In their initial meeting, however, Pike's visual and moral powers are not sufficiently advanced for him to do more than see the possibility active in her image. Moreover, his interest in her is interrupted by the unexpected appearance of Teresa.

When Teresa enters the scene, a struggle for dominance over her issues by virtue of her role as Angel's woman. Accompanied by another young woman, Teresa brings a gift of two horses to General Mapache. Literally looking up to the General, who sits uppermost in the square, Teresa connects herself to his higher authority. Angel sees her, but cannot bear the sight of "his" woman enamored of another man, especially

Mapache. When she joins Mapache, sitting on his lap and kissing him, Angel's worst vision--the vision that has fed his revenge--becomes actually visible, and he shoots her. Angel's reaction to what he sees, mediated by his Old World ethos, violates Teresa's lively image, and, moreover, subordinates her image to the Old World, which, in its passion for abstraction, denies the moving power of images in favor of ideals--in Angel's case, the ideals of honor and of woman.

The two methods of relating male and female--Pike's and Angel's--deepen the split between the Old and New Worlds that began emerging in the village sequence. While Pike's look at the young woman is brief, it offers a possibility for interaction that is open and free from imposition, one in which equal individuals share interest in and mutually complement one another. Since Pike and the woman do not know each other, and particularly since Pike does not at this time know that she is a whore, they see each other fresh and without preconceptions. The novelty of their initial contact values the New World's imaginative power of making beginnings.

Angel's interaction with Teresa, however, not only promotes the Old World's ideals, it carries the Old World story to its narrative conclusion--an end. Teresa's death marks the victory of abstraction over the life in images. It narrates a literally tragic vision, wherein the intellect, dividing itself from the senses, elevates its power "to separate and decide" and makes of vision a lesser power and one that reveals horror.[19] Moreover, Angel's Old World method advances decreative violence, a violence opposed to the creative cinematic violence entailed in "shooting out." When Angel shoots Teresa, he ends her life as a self-moving image. In the next scene, when her serene corpse

appears in a funeral procession, it is borne by old women, and its image conveys the Old World's highest beauty--the still image of the transcendent soul flown from the ravages of a mutable, sensory world. Preceded by a crucifix, which, in the Old World's tradition, signifies the soul's plight on earth, Teresa's image is appropriated by Old World ends.

In the Bunch's intellectual phase, it is Angel's relation to the female, not Pike's dawning one, that becomes dramatically central. When he shoots Teresa, Angel endangers the Bunch. At the same time, the tension that follows his act generates in them a new unity. Unlike Starbuck, when unity depended upon physically escaping, Agua Verde requires that the Bunch get smart--and they do. As they face the line of Mapache's armed men, Pike coolly explains why Angel has shot the girl, and Dutch reaches out to retrieve his gun from the hand of a soldier who, in the melee following the shooting, has taken it from him. By keeping their "head," that is, by responding rationally and with moderation, the Bunch disarm the agents of the Old World and gain admittance to their inner sanctum.

Escaping the Old World's Design: The Bunch Advance as New Worlders

In the meeting sequence, wherein the plan for the train robbery is to be designed, the Old World's rational drive to order and structure action asserts itself in the image of the map that opens the scene. The map, which abstracts the territory through which the Bunch will move, signals that they have entered the domain of the "head." For the Bunch, the meeting evolves their ability to adapt to Old World custom and to turn it to their advantage. Not only do they observe protocol, they enter into a business transaction with the Mexicans that works via

the external connections attendant to a contractual or legal agreement. In addition, the Bunch counter their New World origins by becoming political mercenaries for Mapache; while they "share very few sentiments with [their] government," their alliance with Mapache allows the possibility that they may become mere pawns in a larger political and historical drama. Their continued advance depends upon how they negotiate the new limitations that the connection with Mapache poses, and upon how well they assimilate the rational power that directs the Old World, particularly as it exposes in the meeting sequence its tendency to break down.

Appropriate to the Bunch's advance within Agua Verde, an advance which proceeds through novelty rather than through structure and design, no plan gets made. Teresa's funeral procession enters the room and distracts the men. Led by the crucifix, the procession prefigures the complete degradation of the old order as it will become imagined in the movie's final phase. In the meeting room, however, it leads to the tensely humorous exchange between the Bunch and the Mexicans, an exchange that finally gives way to a raucous sequence in which Lyle and Tector frolic with three whores in the town's wine cellars, while the rest of the Bunch, stripped of their clothes and pretense in the Mexicans' sauna, share laughter and wine in celebration of the prospect of acquiring gold.

The Agua Verde sequence, which initiates the intellectual phase of the Bunch's advance, evolves their ability to "make do" with the opportunities life presents to them. They move from the periphery of the town scene in the opening shots, to its dramatic center when Angel shoots Teresa, and, in the last shots of the sequence, to its deepest

interiors--the cellars and sauna--wherein through laughter they affirm and regenerate the moral centering that unifies them. In the process of penetrating the fortress of the Old World, the Bunch come to work within, not against, its structure. They move freely within the framed interiors and negotiate with ease the contractual connection with Mapache. The camera eye, too, narrates the Bunch's growth in the first and last shots of the sequence. From its opening shot, wherein it first centers on the Mexican woman nursing her infant, and then zooms out to discover the Bunch within the larger scene of Agua Verde, the cinematic eye moves to the sequence's closing shot--one that centers in the laughing faces of the Bunch as they play in the sauna, like children, exuberantly splashing water on one another. The energy of new life spontaneously erupts in the Bunch's images, and it carries them into the train job not as pawns of history and the past or of a political point of view, but as moral imaginations open to new possibilities.

Shooting Out of Structure: The Bunch Blast the Bridge

While the Bunch, in contrast to Mapache and the Germans, clearly promote New World value, they nevertheless bear the mark of their character as killers and outlaws. The train robbery requires, as did the Starbuck job, that they act antagonistically and willfully. The fact that their goal is gold, an abstract monetary value, further indicates their acquiescence in character. Pike, however, imagines this new job in another light. Riding to meet the train, he remarks to Dutch that this time they will "do it right." Foremost, his interest is moral--he wants to perform better than he did in Starbuck. Imaginatively, the drive to "live well" drives the Bunch in the train job.

The camera eye initiates the robbery sequence through an act of centering. From the shot of the Bunch on horseback, it cuts to a head-on shot of the moving train. The train's image advances the mechanical energies of the red automobile. From the head-on shot, the camera cuts to view the train's structural connections--the points at which drive-shafts join to wheels, and, crucial to the robbery, the point at which the car couples with the car containing Deke, bounty hunters, and young Army recruits, all of whom guard the train. Imaged foremost as a mechanical structure, the train promotes the intellectual faculty that the Bunch and the camera eye, through their mutual ability to move with the machine, are together evolving. The Bunch literally get "into" the train as process: Angel hides inside and is visually born from the coal chute that fuels the train's engine, and Pike works inside the engine itself, directing the other men and driving the train. Central to their success, moreover, is the ability to perform an analytical act: they divide the train in two, making off with the engine and the explosives and leaving Thornton and the Army sitting behind.

Together with the Bunch, the camera eye moves on the inside of the robbery's action. Through a series of cuts, it selects just those details that efficiently accomplish the Bunch's division of the train. Aligned with the Bunch's drive to "live well," which emerges in the train robbery through their increased professionalism, the camera eye's professional competence--manifested through its facility for narrating the chain of events through which the Bunch get the train--works to free the centering powers active in the train's image and embodied in the engine and the explosives as centers of power. Through its drive

for getting on the "inside" of the action, the camera eye effects a "nuclear" method that allows it, via centering and converging, to narrate in units of action.

The robbery sequence conjoins three actions: the Bunch's performance of the robbery, the lawmen's reaction, and the train engine's collision with the boxcar. In the first part of the sequence, the three actions occur within a single event, that which occurs as the Bunch board and disconnect the train. Once they have accomplished the theft and begin to move with the train away from Thornton and the rest, the camera must converge actions that previously were joined in time and location. In the second stage of the sequence, the chase commences. The camera then cuts between shots of the Bunch, shots of the bounty hunters leaving the boxcar and riding after them, and shots of the activity at the train--the young recruits and the frustrated officer trying to unload horses from the remaining boxcars before the engine slams into them. The three actions, whose images successively center the camera's interest, unfold singly and in relation to one another. Each action evolves a story; each becomes a nucleus of narrative action involved in forward advance.

The train's story completes first. When the Bunch have unloaded its cargo into their wagon, Pike gears the train into reverse and lets it go. He smiles and salutes the engine as it moves away. His pleasure acknowledges the good in his work; he has performed well. Moreover, in reversing the train's path, he turns the machine and its vectoral powers upon the lawmen who live by such powers, those whose method of reaction values structural rather than center-to-center relating. Appropriately, when the train smashes into the boxcar, it disrupts the

Army's plan for catching the Bunch. Men scatter and horses tumble in slow motion. Cinematic activity intensifies. Amid all the action, the camera eye zooms in to a super close-up of the young officer's eyes. The eyes' image centers the cinematic explosion underway, and it discloses the genius of the eye at the center of the movie's advance.

Completing the train's story, the explosive collision that gives birth to the eye's image further gives birth to the next stage of the robbery--the sequence at the bridge. When the Bunch reach the bridge, Deke and the bounty hunters have nearly caught up with them. The chase, as a sequence of alternating shots between the Bunch and the bounty hunters, gives way to a gun battle that erupts between the two groups while the Bunch are attempting to cross the bridge. With its latticed, geometric structure--whose intersecting beams favor point-to-point connecting--the bridge gives visible form to the rational powers the Bunch work to assimilate in the second phase of their advance. Through it, they must not only escape the immediate danger of losing their lives, but in addition they must shed the limitations of their past in relation to Deke and the bounty hunters.

Deke's appearance at the bridge clarifies the Bunch's character and their value as outlaws. He reestablishes the dramatic conflict between him and Pike, and brings forward the design of Harrigan to have the Bunch dead. In this way, he promotes the dramatic structures within the movie that tie the Bunch to their past in Starbuck. At the same time, in his adherence to the law's method of reaction, Deke clarifies the Bunch's value as outlaws--as images that move at the leading edge of action, and, consequently, focus on what is ahead of them. At the bridge, the Bunch, together with the camera eye, act to

escape the hold of the past and "shoot out" into the emergent moral possibility.

The bridge sequence converges the actions issuing into the robbery sequence. It brings together the Bunch, Deke and his men, and the cavalry soldiers from the train. Further, it converges the dramatic and historical character of the Bunch, through the job they perform for Mapache, with their cinematic value as moving images. They operate both as individuals whose prime urge is to do good work and as political representatives of the Mexican general. Their conflict with Deke, especially Pike's, is personal and dramatic; their conflict with the Army enlarges the arena of their advance to include a political relation with the New World. In converging all these possibilities in such a way as to maintain unity and increase their ability to act, the Bunch and the camera eye generate tremendous explosive energies: they blast the bridge.

Working with the rational powers operating in the sequence, the bridge constitutes the last connection that the Bunch have to negotiate in completing the robbery. As it literally bridges their path of escape into Mexico, once it explodes, the Bunch are free from what lies behind them--and free, too, to look forward to how they will outsmart Mapache and turn his plan to double-cross them to their advantage. The explosion enacts their moral assimilation of the rational powers imaged in the bridge. Through it, the Bunch "shoot out" of what seeks to confine them. Moreover, the explosion--cinematically achieved through slow-motion intercutting and rapid montage--unleashes with new vigor the camera eye's nuclear energies, energies that have increased their

power of violent transformation beyond what they generated in Starbuck through gunfire and scorpion fire.

In the aftermath of the explosion, their job successfully performed, the Bunch group around the wagon. Tector opens a bottle of whiskey, drinks, corks it, and passes it to Pike. The camera follows the bottle as it moves from Pike to Freddie, to Angel--who drains it--and finally drops into Lyle's hands, empty. The rest of the men burst into laughter. The camera cuts to each face, seeing again in Freddie's method the regenerative power of shared good humor. Fueled by a job well-done and the new affirmation of their unity, the Bunch "shoot out" through their laughter into the next action within the intellectual phase.

The Bunch Go Forward; Deke Evolves Peripheral Images

In the intellectual phase of their advance, the Bunch increase their ability to design a plan and "do it right." Moreover, aligned with the camera eye and the sequence's "nuclear" energies (imaged in the initial shot of the train and visibly unleashed in its collision and in the explosion of the bridge), the Bunch assimilate the rational and structural powers within the moral process of their advance. In the beginning of the action that follows the bridge sequence, Pike and the men consolidate their intellectual gain by preparing for the upcoming meeting with Mapache when they are to turn over the rifles and ammunition. Pike's awareness that they must be ready for the Mexicans indicates an improvement in his foresight and reveals his sense of the Bunch's autonomy in relation to Mapache. Pike will fulfill his contractual obligation and get his gold, but he will not be "had" by the

General as he was by Harrigan in Starbuck. Advancing his drive for professional competence further, he welcomes the fact that the cache of weapons includes a machine gun whose method of operation he vows to learn. Pike's interest at the outset of the new action centers in continuing to do good work.

Two events intervene before the Bunch meet Mapache's forces in the desert. First, Pike and Dutch lie behind a small dune looking through binoculars. They see Deke and the bounty hunters tracking them. Deke's presence reasserts the method of law as a hindrance to the Bunch's advance, which continues to proceed through their attempts to escape. The camera eye looks through the binoculars with Pike, sharing his view; but it additionally cuts to Deke, whom it discovers in the midst of an argument with the bounty hunters. Despite his character as a representative of the law, Deke is advancing. Unlike the bounty hunters, he recognizes the Bunch's expertise: he knows they are probably watching him, that they are "men," and he "wish[es] to God [he] were with them." Morally, Deke is becoming more and more aligned with the Bunch and with the camera eye. And the contrast between his "bunch" and Pike's clarifies the Bunch's increasing moral coherence.

The second event prior to the appearance of the federales occurs in the Bunch's new campsite. The Bunch are surprised, and, for a few moments, held at knife-point by peasant revolutionaries who have come for the guns Angel has promised them. Coming in a sequence given to advancing the Bunch's professionalism, the Mexicans show that the Bunch have not entirely mastered the skills necessary to keep them alive, and that their limitations of vision--in this episode, Lyle and Tector fail to properly manage the lookout--still operate. Pike, nevertheless,

recognizes and remarks on the Mexicans' expertise; and in valuing their ability, he allows the possibility of improving his own.

The appearance of the Mexicans also advances the Old World story as it unfolds through the movie. They give new form to the revolutionary ideals espoused by Angel, and, with the acquisition of guns, quicken the possibility for violent conflict within the already divided world of Agua Verde. Unlike Angel, however, who verbally proclaims the ideals of revolution, these Mexicans are active revolutionaries--they do their work without speaking. Moreover, as revolutionaries, they promote change and thus participate in the movie's moral action. But they value a mode of change that literally "rolls back" rather than one that goes forward. While they are more advanced as agents of action than is Angel, the revolutionaries nevertheless bear the mark of the Old World order which has no method for change outside the violent substitution of one rule for another. The revolutionaries, as a consequence, focus not only the Bunch's professional aspirations and limitations, they also clarify the evolutionary method of change that drives the Bunch's advance and that works through the three-phase method of the camera eye.

The Bunch Center; The Camera Eye Quickens

Centering, as a means of focusing and concentrating the power in images to relate center-to-center, becomes the primary cinematic act in the canyon episode wherein the Bunch emerge as a nucleus of explosive power. Surrounded by hundreds of Mexican federales, the Bunch form the visual and narrative center of the scene. They are compact like the nuclei of atoms--they all, except Dutch, ride on the wagon--and they are potently charged. The wagon is wired to explode if the federales

give them any trouble, and at its top sits the machine gun, loaded and ready for action. The forces of the Old World, too, have increased their power. For the first time in the movie, they appear en masse as a military command. The latent possibility for violence within the Old World, earlier quickened by the appearance of the revolutionaries, becomes, in this meeting between the Bunch and the federales, an actual possibility.

Violent action in the episode occurs, however, not overtly, but in the dramatic tension that builds between Pike and Herrera (the Mexican in charge), and, concomitantly, in the camera eye's intense centering and cutting. When Herrera says that the Mexicans will kill the Bunch "pretty soon" whether or not they hand over the rifles, the camera cuts to a close-up of Pike, who holds a lit cigar only inches away from a fuse. The camera then cuts and zooms in on the bundle of dynamite at the end of the fuse, then cuts and zooms to Herrera's sweating face. As in the train job, the camera shows its facility for the central narrative detail that promotes action. Moreover, the zoom shots increase the tension building toward the final shootout.

The canyon episode, in addition, continues the peripheral advance of Deke, who, in the scene's last shot, appears for the first time in the movie in the same frame with the Bunch. In a high angle shot, the camera overlooks Deke as he looks down into the canyon at the Bunch's wagon driving away. While he is physically distant from them, and while the line of the canyon wall divides him from them, his cinematic proximity with their images inside the frame enacts his advance into moral alignment with the Bunch and with the increasingly active moral energies of the camera eye.

With the camera's new interest in centering, events speed up. Pike goes to Agua Verde and explains the plan for exchanging guns and gold. Mapache shoots the machine gun, his "gift" from the Bunch. Pike sends Lyle and Tector for their share of the money, then Dutch and Angel go. Angel is captured in Agua Verde, and, back on the trail, the bounty hunters shoot Freddie. Freddie disappears into the hills, and the Bunch, agitated by the disjunctive turn of events, return to Agua Verde. Through this series of actions, the Bunch begin to fall apart. They lose two of their members, and the men who remain argue among themselves. Their professional achievement in the train job and in the canyon episode are undermined by a new occasion of Pike's failure to foresee—this time he fails to imagine that Angel might be in danger if he goes to Agua Verde--and the new assault by the bounty hunters tightens the snare of the escape plot. The Bunch do not even keep in hand the gold they have earned; Pike takes one sack with him to Agua Verde and they bury the rest.

Moreover, the sequence from the canyon episode to the Bunch's re-entry into Agua Verde sees the power of the Old World strengthen. Centering occurs primarily in Agua Verde, in Mapache's shooting spree and in Angel's capture. When Mapache fires the machine gun, the camera's centering powers are unleashed via the hand of the Old World. Mapache turns in the center of town, blasting pottery and scattering people. The camera, taking the gun's view, turns with Mapache. When Angel is captured, the Mexicans stand around him in a circle, laughing derisively. Angel turns from face to face, and again the camera takes the view from the center. It rapidly swish-pans around the enclosure of men, its motion obscuring their images. The powers of centering, which in the

Bunch promote unity and coherence, promote division in Agua Verde. While Mapache's shooting episode evolves the value of humor in the movie, for the people of Agua Verde it is a danger and it contributes to a breakdown in the hierarchy of command. Mapache will not listen to the Germans who insist the gun can only be fired from a tripod. Moreover, as the movie's moral phase unfolds, humor is becoming lethal--at least when it serves the Old World.

The shots that narrate Angel's capture disclose even more the Old World's decreative urge. When Angel tries to escape and the Mexicans rope his horse out from under him, the camera eye moves erratically, revealing Angel's vision as he falls, and revealing, too, the fate of vision when it becomes subjugated to the hierarchical powers upon which Agua Verde is constructed. When the camera again takes his perspective and turns inside the circle of Mexicans, it further clarifies the Old World's perversion of the moral powers of centering. In that shot, the Old World stands divided against itself and turns on Angel, who is one of its own. Through its inherent tendency to divide, the Old World's intellectual perspective turns the centering and regenerative powers of laughter--which in the movie and in the Bunch promote moral advance--into an occasion of self-reflexive irony. Turning upon Angel's image, the Mexicans deride the reflection of their own method and reveal the moral absence at its heart.

While the Old World revels in its own degeneration, the Bunch attempt to recoup their powers of unity and coherence. Dutch's news of Angel's capture entails his emergence as the conscious spokesman for morality within the Bunch. Dutch insists that they ought to save Angel, especially since he has lived up to Pike's code and has "played his

string out to the end." In addition, when they see Freddie is shot, Dutch argues for the Bunch's moral relation to Deke. Pike claims that Deke cannot be blamed for his actions since "he gave his word"; Dutch clarifies the moral issue: it is not the fact that one gives his word, but "who you give it to" that counts. The Bunch leave the desert and return to Agua Verde with new and explicit moral awareness.

While the dawning in Pike and the Bunch of moral consciousness via Dutch's statements prepares for their move into the moral phase, it does not direct the transition. The final events of the intellectual phase--the breakdown of unity within the Bunch, the subversion of centering within the Old World--expose the inability of the intellectual phase, on its own, to continue the Bunch's advance. Moreover, its completion reveals that the Bunch, who, despite their urge to live well and despite the value of their moral growth as a central action within the camera eye, nevertheless continue to fail in looking out ahead. It is through their failure in imagination that the Bunch ultimately lack the genius to escape the limits of their character and the plot of the past. The move from the intellectual to the moral phase happens through the camera eye, through its increasing activity and talent for promoting the power in the movie's images--and particularly through its ability to align the Bunch's difficult growth with its own narrative advance.

The Bunch Give Way to the Camera Eye; The Camera Eye Shoots Free

As the Bunch make the transition from the intellectual to the moral phase, they appear disarmed as a group and as a command. The powers that unified them in the earlier two phases are no longer sufficient to advance them. The new power, the moral power suggested by Dutch,

needs to emerge into action. Dutch's words, however, as verbal acts inherently biased toward intellectual aims, cannot lead the Bunch into moral action; and, in fact, the Bunch do not go to Agua Verde with the conscious intention of saving Angel. The moral power which they must evolve works in a new way. Appearing neither as the outcome of the Bunch's physical coherence as a body, nor as a rationally determined cause, the new moral power appears spontaneously, an imaginative act of the individual, and it relates individuals center-to-center. That power, already active in the Bunch in their urge toward shared good humor, comes to the fore in the new phase in Agua Verde. Confronted with Angel's violated image, the Bunch do not generate laughter, but rather they give birth to Pike's imaginative moral act, to the new imaginative union of the Bunch, and to the annihilation of the Old World.

The new moral phase begins with a shot of fiery pinwheels spinning at the entrance to Agua Verde. The pinwheels bring forward the colorful and explosive energies inherent in moving images, and they center the camera eye in visual activity. The camera, too, moves through Agua Verde as the Mexicans celebrate the acquisition of guns. The image of a woman's leg appears. A man pours tequila up her foot, ankle, and thigh, then follows the liquid's path with his tongue. His action images the self-consumptive and decreative energies loose in Agua Verde. As the Bunch enter, they see Angel's bruised and battered body being dragged by the red automobile. In the Old World, the car's image is brought into the service of the destruction of images, and the sight--which to Pike and Dutch is "hate[ful] to see"--rapes vision and clarifies the Bunch's emerging moral eye.

Unable to contract for Angel's release--Pike offers Mapache all his gold for Angel's life, but Mapache refuses--the Bunch seek out the women of Agua Verde. The camera jump-cuts to Pike as he straightens his clothes in the room of the young whore, the woman he saw earlier when Angel shot Teresa. They have just made love, and the young woman sits at her table in a loose white dress, washing the lustrous skin of her shoulders. She is all light and subtle motion. Pike sits heavily on the bed. He looks at the woman and at her child, an infant swaddled in white. The camera centers in Pike's lined and sober face. He takes out some pieces of gold and gives them to the young woman. Neither of them speaks. Then Pike moves through an open doorway into an adjoining room where Lyle and Tector haggle with their whore over price. He looks at Lyle and says, "Let's go."

Pike's move is spontaneous and imagined, and it enacts his birth as an imaginative and moral creature. The words that throughout their adventure have led the Bunch forward into action, focus anew their urge to live well and to live better, and direct that urge toward the explicitly moral effort to save Angel. Furthermore, Pike's moral birth occurs through an act of vision--through looking at the young woman and seeing her center-to-center. The gift of his gold divests him of abstract value and provides her with the means for new life. His words, subsequently, do not command Lyle and Tector to follow a moral precept, but affirm the moral and visual transformation that occurs through his relation with the female image. When Pike, Lyle, and Tector walk out of the brothel and into the light, no words at all are required to join Dutch in the moral prospect before them. Their new unity, the outcome

of Pike's move into moral action, happens imaginatively and spontaneously; and through it, they evolve themselves and their adventure into full correlation with the cinematic eye. They become, in a sense, the movie's new-born heroes, those central images who most thoroughly embody and enact its value of transformation. As they march through Agua Verde, the Bunch move beyond the traps of character and plot, beyond the restrictions of the Old World and the method of law. And moving into full alignment with the centering and converging powers of the cinematic imagination, they arrive in the center of town where they encounter the Old World at its worst. Mapache, drunk and dishevelled, reveals the degradation of order in the Old World, its inherent tendency toward entropic decline. In contrast, the Bunch, unified through clear moral vision, appear as images of light. Against the brown wall of Agua Verde, Pike's white shirt radiates the full potency of its cinematic medium. Morally individuated, the Bunch project the camera eye's genius for shooting out. Pike demands Angel's freedom, and Mapache, promising he will give Angel to Pike, pushes Angel's violated body toward the Bunch. He cuts the ropes that bind his wrists. Then, in a swifter motion, the General raises his knife and slits Angel's throat.

The disjunctive energies of the Old World climax in this brutal act of division. Angel's lifeblood, the source that nourishes his body, spills from him into the light. Its image exposes to view the failure of division--the intellectual method advanced both by the Old World and the law--to nourish life, at the same time its vital red color energizes the Bunch's and the camera eye's moral imaginations. Immediately, Pike blasts Mapache, and the camera eye, through a flurry

of cuts, makes of the Bunch's images an explosive center. They stand in circle formation, their backs toward one another, their guns pointing out. Visual activity intensifies in the eye-contact between the Bunch and the Mexicans; in fact, it is the only thing moving. Out of this charged moment, Pike straightens, takes aim at the German, and fires. His deliberate act brings the Bunch's moral adventure completely into view, and it frees the camera eye to perform its supreme moment of "shooting out."

In the final shootout converge the amassed and decadent powers of the Old World, the dramatic story of the Bunch--their function as characters "marked" by plot--and the fully-emergent power of the cinematic imagination that centers through the Bunch's morally empowered images. The Bunch literally shoot out of the center: they occupy the central position in the town square and they control the machine gun whose pivoting action makes it, like the spinning pinwheels, an explosive center. Together with the camera's intense action, the Bunch unleash the nuclear, centering energies that became concentrated in their images in the canyon episode and that have been evolving since the movie's opening shot.

Their limitations, however, their "mark" as characters, work to bring about their end. Embroiled in head-to-head conflict with the Old World, the Bunch repeat the antagonistic, and dramatic method of relating that hindered them in Starbuck and that gave rise to the "plot" of the past to undermine and resist their moral advance. Visually, their individual forms, aided by the potent "sting" of their weapons, recalls the image of scorpions overrun by ants. In living up to the moral and cinematic value in their images too late, the Bunch

bring about the dramatic death to which their character as killers, and the ants/scorpion metaphor, foredoomed them. Moreover, they expose the perversion of the centering powers in the Old World's drama wherein vision becomes lethal, wherein men shoot women and children shoot men.

The Bunch are picked off one by one until only Dutch is left standing. And as he is fatally hit, he sees Pike die and calls his name. Though Dutch, the moral voice of the Bunch, has the last word, "Pike" is the last word in the Bunch's dramatic story; and it is "Pike," the name, the repository and mark of character, that dies. The camera eye plays the Bunch's string out to the end, and when they, as characters and as names, have evolved their moral genius, and that of the movie, as far as they can, the camera eye "shoots out" via their death beyond the dramatic structures that have defined its story as the story of "The Wild Bunch." In making its narrative getaway, the camera eye unleashes through the excessive violence of the shootout the nuclear powers of centering. The shootout's excess, its spilling over of energy, allows for a new moral fusion in the images of Deke and Freddie.

The Bunch Resurrect; The Camera Eye Makes A Beginning

From Pike's still image, the camera cuts to Deke and the bounty hunters emerging through the smoke-filled archway into Agua Verde. Combining the curved form of the circular shape associated with centering--the Bunch's circular formations, the spinning pinwheels, the driving wheels of the train--and the straight line associated with the rational structures of the Old World, the archway images a threshold

that allows synthesis and transition into a new phase. Deke enters the frame with Pike's body and takes the dead man's gun. Visually aligned with Pike, Deke acts out his moral attachment to his old friend and completes the drama between them. Free of his dramatic function as a representative of law, Deke leaves the compound and sits by its outside wall. He is free to look forward. The camera eye follows the bounty hunters as they leave with the bodies of the Bunch, then cuts to center in Deke's image. His emergence from the periphery into the center initiates the new phase wherein the cinematic eye's powers of transformation come to the fore.

As Deke sits at the wall, the camera cuts to a close-up that emphasizes his eyes. As instruments of vision, Deke's eyes focus the camera's increased imaginative activity. What is happening now is inexplicable by anything that has come before. Gunshots emerge in the distance, and Deke smiles. The camera cuts to a shot of the wounded Mexicans slowly filing out of the town and into the countryside. It pans to Deke, who continues to look ahead. All action focuses out front, away from Agua Verde. Moreover, there is no sense of rational time, no sense of how many minutes pass between shots or of the strict linear progression that operated in the cutting during the train robbery. There is only the simple succession of images, and the camera's interest in Deke, and the sense of something happening--of a beginning in the making.

Freddie's appearance comes as a miracle of the camera eye. Across a cut from Deke, Freddie's image emerges through a swirling plasma of smoke and dust. It comes as a gift of the cinematic eye's excess, its

spilling over of creative energy from the explosion in Agua Verde. Freddie rides with the Old Mexican, a boy from Angel's village, and the Mexican revolutionaries. His appearance regenerates Deke and allows for the birth of a new and lighter bunch. Freddie invites Deke to join him--"Me an' the boys got work to do." And as Deke mounts up, Freddie begins to laugh. His laughter continues as the new bunch ride out and as the camera eye rises above the broken wall of Agua Verde to join with their images that now are moving freely into the wild and open desert. Bringing forward the moral life in the Bunch--their literally good humor--and centering the new moral union alive in the new bunch, Freddie's laughter promotes not only their new adventure, but the camera eye's as well. For having shed, along with the broken structures of Agua Verde, its own "old" story, that is, the story of the Bunch, the camera eye becomes free to imagine them anew. As the closing music comes up on the soundtrack, and the images of Deke, Freddie, the old man, and the boy recede into the distance, the laughing images of Pike, Dutch, Angel, Lyle, and Tector individually dissolve in and out over the longshot of the riders. Their new laughter merges with Freddie's in the Bunch's last act of "shooting out."

In resurrecting the images of the Bunch, the camera eye reveals that its own creative advance entails coming to see the Bunch in a new way. Having killed them as characters, it gives them new life as pure images. They are reborn lightly, and, in the final shot of them, loved--for no reason but for their imaginative life and light. That shot, which shows their exit from Angel's village, allows only the Bunch, not the villagers, to appear. Consequently, it is not the villagers, but the movie-viewer, aligned with the camera's moral vision,

who also comes to see the Bunch anew. Having brought the viewer into the movie's moral action, the cinematic eye freezes the frame and turns the Bunch's colorful image to black and white. The photographic image zooms into the center where it forms the words, "The End." While the documentary image that begins the movie thus comes, finally, to make its end--and simultaneously exposes its Old World bias toward ends--Peckinpah's imagination, centering through the Bunch's new-born images, makes a beginning. When it opens again in The Ballad of Cable Hogue, the cinematic eye will carry over the act of centering through which it completes The Wild Bunch. And its moral urge to see the life in images--still visible in the radiant green that borders the movie's final shot--will give birth in Cable to a new central image, one which, empowered through the feat of The Wild Bunch, will further evolve Peckinpah's new narrative adventure.

Notes

[1] The violence entailed in "shooting out" emerges as a central narrative power or value through which Peckinpah accomplishes transformation. Violence is never merely a theme for Peckinpah, as critics almost universally claim. It is always a means of transition.

[2] Cutting, as a cinematic act, is inherently violent. It violates the physical integrity of the film and the continuity of the moving image. Traditionally, it is seen as a means to manipulating "meaning" in film. In his chapter on editing, Bela Balasz says, "I dislike this word [editing] and think the French expression 'montage' far more adequate and expressive, for it means 'assembly' and that is really what happens in editing. . . .Montage is the association of ideas rendered visual; it gives the single shots their ultimate meaning, if for no other reason, because the spectacle presupposes that in the sequence of pictures that pass before his eyes there is an intentional predetermination or interpretation." (See Balasz, Theory of Film: Character and Growth of a New Art [New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1970], pp. 118-19.) In this essentially intellectualist view, cutting is an external violence imposed upon the narrative that directs what

images can mean; it brings order to the images but denies them autonomous life. In Peckinpah's eye, particularly at its most intense in The Wild Bunch, cutting does not render "the association of ideas," it enacts narrative advance. Its violence foremost generates action, not meaning, and consequently it promotes the moral rather than the thematic.

[3] Character, etymologically, means a mark. It refers to a person's conventional, social identity--that aspect of him that does not change and that is known through a name. Insofar as the Bunch are characterized or identified as outlaws (as they are, e.g., by the lawmen), they are limited in their efforts to change or morally grow. Insofar as they move outside the law and elude its tendency to characterize them, their life as outlaws involves them in moral advance.

[4] Peckinpah insists that he is a "storyteller." "I don't make documentaries," he says. "The facts about the siege of Troy, of the dual between Hector and Achilles and all the rest of it, are a lot less interesting to me than what Homer makes of it all. And the mere facts tend to obscure the truth anyway. As I keep saying, I'm basically a storyteller." (See Playboy, p. 72.) Peckinpah's narrative sense of his work affirms Fellini's statement that "the dimensions of history do not, after all, matter in art." (See Fellini on Fellini, p. 62.)

[5] Violent images (such as the ants and scorpions, gunblasted bodies, and Angel's battered image) can promote violence as a visual theme within the movie. But "theme" in this sense is not a controlling idea, an asbtraction which the images simply flesh out. Each time a thematic image appears, it is concrete and particular, and it enacts a specific transformation of value in the actual moment it appears.

[6] Etymologically, penetration is nourishment. Part of Peckinpah's visual genius appears in his ability to penetrate images, to get at their center and see what, creatively, they can do. This talent gives rise, in the image of ants and scorpions--and in the later images of the runaway train and the red car--to the fine excess that makes of these images not simply metaphors, but sources of cinematic and narrative power in the movie.

[7] In Peckinpah's next movie, The Ballad of Cable Hogue, Cable, the central figure, is no longer an outlaw. His story, moreover, entails a limited attempt to "go in among 'em," that is, to become socialized. In Convoy, the community's involvement in the act of convoying becomes a central issue of the movie's narrative advance.

[8] Seydor, in Peckinpah: The Western Films, works out much more thoroughly the theme of diminishing space. See pp. 120-23.

[9] It is no accident that, in Aristotle's often-cited phrase, plot is "the soul of a tragedy." In Oedipus Rex (the "most perfect tragedy" from which Aristotle theorizes in The Poetics), Oedipus's fate becomes manifest through the "arrangement of incidents"; and conversely, what is born out of the play's plot is the triumph of fate over the life of Oedipus. Classical tragedy thus narrates the emergence of plot as a structure imposed by the author-authority from outside the narrative, and one inherently suited to enact the Olympian imposition of fate upon human affairs--so that the story told by tragedy, as a form, is that of what has already been verbally decreed. Much less important to tragic narration--it is of so little importance, according to Aristotle, that "the power of tragedy. . .is felt even apart from" it--is "spectacle," Aristotle's term for the image. Alive within a medium of spectacle, or images, the Bunch already have the jump on plot. (Quotations are from Aristotle, The Poetics, in Hazard Adams, Critical Theory Since Plato [New York: Collier Books/The Macmillan Co., 1970], pp. 51-52.)

[10] Peckinpah is probably best known for his particular trait of intercutting slow motion with regular motion shots. In A Portrait In Montage: Peckinpah (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), p. 101, Garner Simmons quotes the film editor of The Wild Bunch, Lou Lombardo: "There were 3,642 individual cuts in [The Wild Bunch]--more than any other color film ever made. I had remembered I think it was Hitchcock saying one time that if you wanted to make a picture really exciting, you needed a lot of cuts. An average picture will have no more than, say, 600 cuts. So on that basis, The Wild Bunch was the most exciting picture ever made."

[11] Seydor tells the story of how this image got into the movie: "It is interesting to note that this symbol was first presented to Peckinpah in the form of a simile. Emilio Fernandez, the Mexican director who plays Mapache, one day told Peckinpah, 'You know, for me, the Wild Bunch is like a scorpion on an ant hill.' Peckinpah snapped to attention, saying, 'Wait a minute, what's that?' Fernandez told him about a game children play in Mexico, filling a cage with ants and dropping some scorpions into it. Peckinpah knew he had found what he needed for his film." (See Seydor, p. 123.) Seydor's language ("symbol," "simile") reflects the typically literary approach of Peckinpah's critics to the image, but his story reveals Peckinpah's intuitive and imaginative response to it.

[12] That the camera eye has its own story, correlatively conjoined with the Bunch's advance, is a central assumption of this study.

[13] In the interview with Stephen Farber, Peckinpah states that he originally wanted to make The Wild Bunch in black and white: "I think black and white evokes a different kind of feeling. We have scratched prints in negative of some of the film, but I'm using it, I'm scratching other prints to give it a newsreel quality." (See Farber, pp. 10-11.) Peckinpah's comment is interesting given the alteration between black and white and color in the credit sequence. In effect, that alteration narrates a change in Peckinpah's imaginative sense of the movie, a change that moves him from his emphasis on the documentary, "newsreel" image to the livelier moving color image.

[14] When Harrigan says, "I represent the law," he confines his cinematic image within the character of law. Moreover, in representing the law--which, as language, is already a representational medium--Harrigan makes himself twice-removed from the actual and immediate power in his image.

[15] Prior to this scene, the Bunch appear on the trail outside Starbuck when Pike shoots a fatally wounded member of the Bunch. The Gorch brothers argue that the man should receive a decent burial. Pike refuses and Dutch backs him up. This is the Gorches' first challenge to Pike's authority and the first occasion of internal disjunction. Moreover, it is appropriate that the Gorches challenge the Bunch's unity as a body. They are physical images. The most machismo of the Bunch, they sport facial hair in contrast to the smooth-skinned faces of Pike and Dutch, and that of the child-faced Angel. Their story of matching whores "in tandem" prepares for the Agua Verde scenes in which they cavort with women, relating to them as bodies via the sense of touch.

[16] Reflection, like reaction, pertains to character. Both focus on the known and identifiable, and the backside of events, rather than out ahead where novelty comes into view. Dramatically, this scene, in conventional terms, develops the characters of Pike and Dutch through revealing what is on their minds.

[17] In The Function of Reason (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), p.8, Alfred North Whitehead discusses life as "a three-fold urge: (i) to live, (ii) to live well, (iii) to live better. In fact, the art of life is first to be alive, secondly to be alive in a satisfactory way, and thirdly to acquire an increase in satisfaction." I use the second term here in regard to Pike to focus my sense of Pike's--and the Bunch's--first advance from the problem of simply maintaining their lives and their unity in Starbuck, to achieving a relatively "satisfactory" life in the camp. Obviously, since they are involved in an ongoing advance, each phase entails "an increase in satisfaction," and so they actually move through the urge to "live better."

[18] Seydor, p. 230. Seydor, in his chapter titled "The Masculine Principle in American Art and Expression," quotes this statement by Ralph Waldo Emerson in "Nature."

[19] The quintessential Old World story of tragic vision is the story of Oedipus, who, in exercising and giving birth to his power of reason, opts for insight into his character at the expense of the natural sense of sight--an act which generates the horrific spectacle of his blinding.

CHAPTER TWO

LOVING WELL: THE MORAL PASSION OF MALE AND FEMALE IMAGES IN THE BALLAD OF CABLE HOGUE

Josh: He wasn't really a good man,
he wasn't a bad man. But
Lord, he was a man.

Hildy: Amen.

From "The Bunch" to "The Ballad": The Camera Eye Links via Cable's Image

In The Ballad of Cable Hogue, Peckinpah's imagination immediately centers within a colorful image of life--the white, brown, and black lizard whose body curves over an oval-shaped rock. As the camera centers in the lizard, the sound of whistling is heard and a shadow, emerging from the right of the screen, passes over the lizard, washing out its color. As the shadow moves, the lizard rises in a defensive posture and hisses. A man's dark-trousered legs step between the lizard and the camera eye; the camera slow-zooms out to show the profiled figures of man and lizard eyeing each other. This shot gives way to a close-up of the man.

As in the beginning of The Wild Bunch, Peckinpah visually narrates, in the opening shots of The Ballad, an individuation. The human image that comes to centrally interest the camera eye in The Bunch is Pike, who first appears as a vague black and white shape in the photograph, then emerges as one man among a group of men when the

photograph cuts into color and motion, and then appears in close-up as a single human image looking at the children. The man who comes upon the lizard begins as a breath sound, then visually emerges: first as a shadow, then as the dark shape of his legs, then as a full body kneeling beside the lizard, and finally as the individuated details of his face in close-up. Both Pike and the first human figure of Cable Hogue undergo visual individuation through the camera eye's successive acts of centering in their images. But Pike moves initially within a group of men before he emerges as a singular image; Cable first appears as a single individual in relation to the natural world.

Moreover, Pike's individuation and the liberation of the Bunch's images in the end of The Wild Bunch prepare for Cable's greater powers as an individual and as a central image in The Ballad. In fact, the story of The Wild Bunch entails evolving the Bunch (who, while they promote the value of "wildness" which focuses their natural powers of moral growth, are also a "bunch," an indiscriminate group), out of their group character and allowing them to emerge as individuals. Pike's individual advance aids in the resurrection of the individual images in the closing shots, but the movie emphasizes "the Bunch" and the group's struggle for unity.

In Cable Hogue, Peckinpah becomes more interested in the single individual--as the movie's title indicates. The Bunch's unity is a narrative problem both for them and for the movie: Pike cannot carry through the advance he begins, and Deke and Freddie, forming the new bunch, must complete it. Furthermore, the male/female convergence that completes Pike's moral individuation and gives way to the creative act within the final shootout cannot in itself advance. Pike dies and

the young woman does not appear again. The movie's emphasis on the male group and its internal relatings limits the possibility of moral interaction between male and female. Cable's story carries forward the incomplete possibility of the Bunch. As an individual who incorporates unitive power within his image and his "self," Cable enacts a more advanced unity from the beginning. His struggle is, foremost, to morally converge the powers within him, and then to extend that interaction, within the world, to his relatings with Hildy, Josh, Taggart, Bowen, and the small society that has commerce with Cable Springs.

In addition, Cable's story advances that of Pike and the Bunch through Cable's new relation to the world beyond himself. The opening sequence with the lizard reveals Cable's non-antagonistic method of relating within the world. Although he intends to kill the lizard to insure his own survival, Cable's attitude toward the animal takes into account their shared relation as living creatures. He addressed the lizard as "old timer," an epithet that might just as well apply to himself; and he raises his knife slowly with respect for the lizard's talent for protecting its life and with respect for the life it is about to give up so that another life can survive. Cable's initial actions promote life, in contrast to the Bunch's performance in Starbuck and in contrast to their character as killers. Their moral growth through the course of the movie leads toward a valuing of life--Angel's--that Cable begins with. Cable's method, as his name suggests, enacts a narrating "linking" between their story and his in that it promotes the value of new life most thoroughly embodied in The Wild Bunch in Freddie. Moreover, Cable is Freddie's visual inheritor in that his

image more closely resembles that of the older man than that of any other member of the Bunch.[1]

Cable emerges as an undifferentiated voice, as a breathing-whistling sound within the natural world projected through the lizard's image. Subsequently, he speaks to the lizard, then to Taggart and Bowen, then to God, and, in the closing shots of the opening episode when he discovers water, to himself. Cable's interest in voice and language initiates another advance in his story beyond that of the Bunch: it initiates the intellectual and humanistic enterprise underway in The Ballad of Cable Hogue, in Cable Springs, and, foremost, in Cable himself. The moral process which in the Bunch's story occurs primarily via rude, physical actions and in relation to external conditions becomes in The Ballad a story of human worth. Cable's talent for "making do" and for tapping the creative "waters" within him allows him to take the possibilities nascent in the end of The Wild Bunch and to advance the Bunch's genius for physical action and unity into a new possibility for self-evolution. Cable's story is, in part, that of the human animal becoming "a man" and learning to work with, not against, the human and intellectual powers entailed in language and social action. In this aspect of his growth, Cable's genius--his inherent creative capability--expresses itself within his growth as a spirit (literally so, in the opening shot wherein he lives as a breath), as a soul in relation to God and in his relation to Josh (who is overtly the man of God), and in his relation to the community.

The camera eye's act of centering in the lizard's image, moreover, reveals a new narrative possibility forming within Peckinpah's cinematic imagination, a possibility that has been evolving since Major Dundee,

the movie that precedes The Wild Bunch. Major Dundee opens with the image of a book--specifically, a journal whose dates mark it as a historical document. Flames emerge through the center of the journal and burn away to its edges to reveal the smoldering aftermath of an Indian massacre. This spectacle becomes the immediate motivating power for getting the Major into action. Visually, the flames--the violent and transformative energies erupting within the center--get the narrative going; and they do so by burning away the blatantly literary and historical document, the book. Its words, which pass over into the voice-over narrating of Dundee's quest by the journal's writer, impose a measure of control over the movie's images by telling (that is, by "narrating" in its limited literary sense) what is occurring within the images.

The opening of Dundee quite literally exposes Peckinpah's imaginative struggle to create the new cinematic narrative from within the older verbal and literary form. Despite the fact that a shot of the closing journal ends the movie, and institutes an explicit literary closure, the violent and creative activity initially apparent in the fire, and in Dundee's moral advance, allows the new narrative possibility within images to come forward and into view. In addition, the journal's author does not command the conventional authority that Dundee, as "Major," does and that the story disposes of. The young lieutenant's journal, while literary, is primarily a narrative, and he is an agent of young life within Dundee's story. Moreover, he survives as one of the loosely formed group of men that gallops into the desert at the movie's end, and that reemerges in the opening of The Wild Bunch, cinematically transformed into the image of the Bunch. While the black

and white photograph that opens The Wild Bunch promotes literary and historical value, it makes an advance beyond the opening shot of Dundee in that it makes a visual beginning. It reveals Peckinpah's drive to shed the literary framing device and to move into closer alignment with the visual power inherent in his medium.

The Ballad's opening with the lizard advances even further Peckinpah's drive to "get right" with visual narrating. The lizard's still image is naturally still, not artificially frozen as are the images of the journal or the opening photographic image of the Bunch. Moreover, it immediately introduces vivid color. And although Cable's shadow, which abstracts his image and relates him to the photographic medium of the previous movie, is the first thing to move in The Ballad, his birth and individuation as an image occur within a natural visual act--i.e., within the camera eye's interest in an image of the natural world.

Peckinpah's growth as a visual narrator also converges with Cable's moral growth, just as it does with that of the Bunch and Major Dundee. In The Ballad, Cable's intellectual and human progress appears narratively in the technical and verbal features of the movie: in the cinematic devices for narrating such as split-screen images, fast motion shots, and the comic transformation of the dollar bill that Cable holds when he sees Hildy; and in the three songs that, through their words and poetic form, reveal the imaginative conditions of Cable, Josh, and Hildy. Peckinpah imagines Cable's story as a "ballad," a literary form, but it is a form that combines narrative with poetic images. It does not promote history and the authority of the past in the way that the historical beginnings of the previous movies do. And in Peckinpah's imagi-

nation, the literary ballad becomes a new form, a visual ballad within which the images make the most of and the best of words. Images, in The Ballad, put words to "good" use, and in doing so bring them into moral alignment with the visual medium in which they occur.

Beginning the Moral Advance: The Camera Eye Imagines Female Value

When the camera eye opens to the lizard and Cable, it sees a creative event, a "dance" between the images of man and natural creature.[2] Their interaction begins in mutual motion: the man's shadow, and then his form, slowly move into view as the lizard rises on its legs. They perform a kind of ritual courtship--the man's dark, upright shape moving precisely around the lightly curving image of the natural creature, his knife poised to penetrate its body. Though no woman is present, a relation between male and female value begins. Moreover, Cable's relation with the lizard brings forward the female quality within nature, "her" bountiful fertility and passion for life. Amid what Taggart soon calls "ten thousand gallons of sand"--a description that emphasizes the barrenness of the desert--Cable and the camera eye discover a living creature whose flesh and moisture offer Cable renewed physical strength, and whose colorful image furnishes the camera eye's narrative powers with a new beginning.

Female value, as it emerges in the opening shots, prepares for Hildy's appearance in the Dead Dog episode and for the further evolution of female value which she, in relation to Cable, enacts. In her clothing and in the decor of her room, in her song and in the Butterfly Mornings sequence, in her final metamorphosis, Hildy will promote the beauty and the nourishing power within nature. In the fact that she

lives by her body, she will advance the physical beginning in Cable's "dance" with the lizard; she and Cable, too, will "dance" in their early encounter--they will move physically in relation to one another, both when they meet and when they first attempt to make love, and the camera eye will promote their physical interaction by seeing them, especially Hildy, in full body shots.

Cable, in his ability to move with the lizard, to see its nourishing value and relate to it morally--that is, to see the good in it for advancing life--acts out of his genius. He demonstrates a moral sense of timing. To complete the act which he initiates and gain food, Cable must move with regard for the lizard as a live and active creature, as a narrator, and he cannot impose an abstract or willful sense of time upon the lizard; rather, he must move with the lizard's moves. The moral timing that occurs between Cable and the lizard gives rise to their dance, to the slow, rhythmic movements that each makes in relation to the other. But the dance is cut short. A gunshot shatters the silence; a slow motion shot fragments the lizard's body. Whereas the moments just prior to the lizard's death reveal that male/female convergence happens in its own time, that it can complete itself and come to fruition only when left to follow its inherent rhythms and moves, the shot that blasts the lizard blasts the possibilities unfolding in the convergence, and it asserts an abstract sense of time. In shifting the narrative emphasis from "what is going to happen" to "what happened," the gunshot raises causality--and with it the dominance of the past--as an enemy of the forward-looking moral timing natural to the convergence of male and female.

Further, the shot comes from outside the relation; it is external to Cable and the lizard. Cable turns to an empty desert and calls, "Taggart! Bowen!" When the camera cuts back to the desert, two men holding rifles emerge. Unlike Cable, who undergoes a spiritual birth from breath-sound into visual image, Taggart and Bowen begin in verbal identification. They are called into nominal existence by Cable; they are created by his fiat. As artifices rather than creatures morally active within the natural world, they promote abstraction and division. They graphically divide the lizard, and they intrude upon Cable's attempted convergence with it. Their willful violence and the joke that they subsequently perpetrate on Cable--they laugh at shooting the lizard and then trick him out of his water--masks the crucial division which they make, that between them and Cable. Through their design to take Cable's water and leave him stranded in the desert, Taggart and Bowen give rise to plot as a feature within Cable's advance and within the movie. In addition, they allow for the emergence of Cable's character as a coward and a fool, a man without wit, bound by his words to seek revenge. As in The Wild Bunch, character and plot in Cable's story oppose moral growth and the uninhibited display of genius; they limit the possibilities for creative advance.

As well as allowing for the emergence of character and plot, the appearance of Taggart and Bowen introduces into the movie the masculine group devoid of female value. Together with Cable, they form a bunch, but one lacking the unity accomplished within the Wild Bunch. Cable's advance, moreover, like Peckinpah's narrative interest, requires a new story and a new method for achieving unity. The Ballad is only peripherally the story of the male group. The men are radically split in the

beginning, and Cable goes off on his own, abandoned to his individual resources. The new group that later forms--the core of which includes Cable, Josh, and Hildy, but also extends to the stagecoach drivers (Ben and Webb), the Dead Dog banker, and, ultimately, to Bowen--centers in Hildy's image. The new bunch that evolves in The Ballad foremost requires the introduction of female value. Furthermore, Cable's advance beyond the revenge plot entails his assimilating Hildy's value in his final relation with Taggart and Bowen. He must learn to forgive and forget, and become, like Hildy, an agent of grace.

Digging into the Source: Cable and the Camera Eye Discover the Water's Image

Cable does not precisely shed the male group; it leaves him. Narratively, Cable's separation from Taggart and Bowen enacts a moral possibility beyond what could be achieved through the male group in The Wild Bunch. It frees Cable to begin the journey "in," to discover his center--the inherent, self-generating, creative energies of the autonomous individual. Cable's moral immaturity, however, prevents him from initiating the quest on his own. His adventure gets forced upon him by the logic of male dominance whose ultimate end is division and death. When Taggart and Bowen split from Cable, Cable is thrust into a moral enterprise--he faces the immediate task of making a life for himself--and the camera eye, favoring moral advance, abandons Taggart and Bowen and turns with Cable to see the desert, open and wild with possibility.

When Cable moves, he moves through his eye. He has no rational knowledge of where he is going. He is a prospector in the literal sense: he sees forward. Cable's visual turn into the desert--narrated

through the camera eye's circular panning shot that corresponds with Cable's vision, and its subsequent slow-zoom out as Cable walks into the center of the frame--performs his entry into imaginative life. Divested of the social attachment, minimal as it was, with Taggart and Bowen, stripped of his possessions and any claim to the accoutrements of civilized life, Cable enters an imaginative wilderness wherein his only tool for survival is his inherent moral sense expressed in an immediate and direct perception of value. Without knowing what he does, or how he does it, Cable will "walk straight to water"; he will be led there through his eye's power for seeing the better way to go.

The movie's early concern with Cable's innate powers of visual narration correlates, or converges in a complementary way, with Peckinpah's increased powers as a cinematic narrator. In The Wild Bunch, no central vision or eye directs the Bunch's advance. Angel claims to be a man of the eye, but his vision is mediated by ideals. Pike early on engages in visual contact with the children of Starbuck, and with subsequent children, as well as with the young Mexican woman, but his vision lacks penetration; he cannot imaginatively and morally converge with those images of new life thoroughly enough or soon enough to save his own life. Moreover, he repeatedly demonstrates failure in vision--when he bumps into the woman in Starbuck, when he fails to foresee the ambush and Angel's capture. Peckinpah's narrative sense is tied in the Bunch's story to their character as killers, and the entire movie must unfold before he can free them as images and allow his imagination to see them in a fully moral light.[3]

Cable begins in a visual act--his dance with the lizard--and is propelled into a visual journey that becomes preeminently a spiritual

journey. The search for water--the refreshing, regenerative source--corresponds with Peckinpah's renewed interest in the narrative sources of his art.[4] Cable hurls curses at Taggart and Bowen's retreating figures and vows to get revenge; but when he turns to the desert he does not speak, he acts. And his act moves him into the visible world and toward convergence with his prospects within it. Concomitantly, his song--literally, his ballad--emerges from the soundtrack,[5] and the camera eye initiates the split-screen shots that narrate his wandering through the desert and introduce the movie's credits. Unlike the credit sequence in The Wild Bunch--which via its association of words with the photographic medium promoted the authority of the past over immediate narrative action--Cable Hogue's credit sequence allows for the introduction of words in a new way. The credits themselves are not intrusive; they emerge out of and disappear into the narrative succession of images. Foremost, Cable's song allows a new power in words--the power of poetry and narrative fused in the ballad form--that works with, not against, the movie's images. In disclosing the imaginative drive that directs Cable's forward-moving figure--both the drive within Cable and within Peckinpah--the ballad's lyrical and temporal unfolding advances The Ballad of Cable Hogue beyond the historical and documentary tendency at work in the beginnings of Major Dundee and The Wild Bunch. Moreover, The Ballad's credit sequence does not end with an image of fiery destruction or with a statement about killing what moves. It completes in the image of Cable lying rested and refreshed by the full waterhole, waking to the dawn of a new day and a new life.

With vision leading the journey forward, Cable's move into the desert also brings into view his spiritual growth. From his birth as

a literal spirit (as a breath), Cable evolves the powers of voice and intellect through a conventional spiritual relation: he prays to a transcendent and authoritative God who, he believes, exercises some control over the affairs of men. Cable's initial external relation to God--he imagines divine power outside himself and "characterized" within a providential deity--reveals the direction his moral advance will take. The journey into the center will entail his secularizing, or bringing down to earth, those divine powers, and ultimately incorporating them within himself. His relatings with Josh, the man of God, and with Hildy, whose image is literally graceful (i.e., full of grace), enact phases of the spiritual advance. Cable's prayers, moreover, enact a preliminary spiritual transformation in him.

In the first prayer, he addresses God politely and somewhat formally:

> Ain't had no water since yesterday, Lord. Gettin' a little thirsty. Just thought I'd mention it. Amen.

At the same time, he implies that the Lord may not be fully on the job. Cable talks to God as readily as he did to the lizard, but with more reserve and distance. He offers a one-sided prayer in that he assumes God's duty to him, but not his duty to God. In the second prayer, Cable becomes more penitent:

> Yesterday, I told you I was thirsty and I thought you might turn up some water. . . . You just send me a drop or two, I won't do it no more--whatever in hell it was I did.

His sense of the relation with divinity now runs in both directions; in promising to live better, he can explicitly ask for water--a request that was implicit in the first prayer. Moreover, his tone is more intimate. This prayer is no formality, but an expression of the heart. Cable means what he says.

When he prays the third time, Cable has gone four days without water. His face looks parched and dry, and he stumbles forward in the midst of a sandstorm:

> If you don't think I put in my sufferin' time, you ought to try goin' dry for a spell. Listen to me. . . if I don't get some soon, I ain't gonna have no chance to repent. [Cable stumbles forward.] Careful now. You're about to get my dander up. [He falls.] You call it, Lord, I'm just plain done in.

Having come to accept God's authority to judge, in the third prayer Cable questions that judgment, and all but enters into an argument with God. His "I," the ego that declares revenge against Taggart and Bowen, and the most emphatic feature of his prayers, nearly declares revenge against the divine power. With the assertion of will that divides him from God, Cable falls, literally and spiritually. The "I" cannot promote his life, and if he is to live, the "I" must be let go.

In giving over his will to the spiritual source, in allowing God to "call it," Cable opts for a power beyond the rational, verbal self; the eye "does in" the I, and the camera eye becomes aligned with the divine power via a high-angle, God's-eye shot that centers in Cable's fallen image directly from above. This is the only shot in the movie in which the camera takes the God's-eye view. In a sense, the shot "answers" Cable's prayer in that it allows the possibility of a transcendent and watchful divinity which his prayers assume. In this respect, it promotes Cable's sense of an external deity that his moral advance will come to make immanent. More important, it converges the divine source--however that source is currently imagined by Cable--with the creative powers active in cinematic narration. As imagined by Peckinpah through this shot, divine power is a visual act, not a

voice or being on high. And it is a visual act that makes visible the source of narrative life in the movie.

The camera eye sees Cable through the swirling sand.[6] Colors--mostly gray-blues--and Cable's shape are indistinct. Cable's figure lies curved in fetal position. A birth is imminent. The camera eye cuts to a shot of his boot; its toe is steeped in mud. Simultaneously, Cable sees the moisture on his shoe. He rises and searches for damp sand, and when he finds it, squeezes drops of water into his mouth. He digs further in, and the desert's water gathers in the small hole. When the water becomes visible, Cable is born into new life. He moves with renewed vigor. Moreover, the water that he discovers evidences the bounty of the visible world--first imaged in the lizard--and advances through its fluidity and oval shape the nourishment associated in the movie with female value. The water is there for discovering, a gift from within.

Cable's act of digging in to the water is a narrative act. It expresses his natural creative vigor. When he later claims to have "found water where it wasn't," he misses the fact that he can only find water--the life source--where it is, and that it is within himself as it is within the entire creation.[7] Cable's reaction to his discovery, however, opposes his inherent imaginative drive. His voice reasserts itself:

> Told you I's gonna live. This is Cable Hogue talkin'. Me--Cable Hogue--Hogue--me--me. I did it. Cable Hogue. I found it.

Having once given himself over to the divine power and asked God to "call it," Cable now allows his voice, the instrument of mind and reason, to take credit for the miraculous discovery. His "I" and name,

not naturally aware of his eye's genius, reclaim priority and divorce his character from the complete narrative event that gave birth to the water. The division that in The Wild Bunch gave rise to two actions--those of the Bunch and the bounty hunters, of outlaw and law--and that narratively alternated between the photographic and cinematic modes of action, manifests in Cable Hogue as a division between Cable's voice and his vision. His advance, and that of the movie, will entail correlating the rational male powers that concentrate in verbal assertion and argument, in naming, and in the plot for revenge, with the centering and creative powers that conjoin male and female value and lead through the eye.

When Cable awakes the next morning, the waterhole has grown into a larger and fuller pool.[8] The dawn brings a moral awakening as well. Cinematically, it brings the final credit, "Directed by Sam Peckinpah," to the screen. The image of Peckinpah's name, together with the image of Cable and the water, credits the creative source of the narrative as a nourishing interaction between male and female value; and it aligns Peckinpah's creative drive with the moral beginning of Cable's adventure. Rising, Cable walks forward and discovers in the sand the rutted tracks of a stagecoach. His eye follows it in both directions and he speaks:

> Wagons, stagecoaches, buckboards. With kids and mamas. People. Goin' somewhere on a road. And I'm on it. Me and my waterhole. I whipped them.

Fresh from the regenerative source, Cable imagines his new prospects. He imagines life and movement on the road and the possibility for his new life springing from the desert. Appropriately, too, he imagines the female and her capacity for giving birth to new life. He imagines a new union between himself and the water--not one rooted in dominance (revenge is an afterthought), but a union that commingles his penetrative

male power of "digging in" with the supple and boundless energies of the fertile water. He imagines the moral enterprise of Cable Springs.

Cable Builds and the Camera Eye Frames

Cable's journey into the wilderness and his communion with the spiritual waters enact a trip "in" to the source of his own creative powers. His awakening and the discovery of civilized human activity begins his trip back "out." For Cable, the trip out is limited by a characteristic inclination to stay put and the fear of "goin' in among 'em." He will die, in fact, without leaving the desert, but his moral advance in relation to the society he encounters, and his power to transform that society, will prepare the way for the new visual community that emerges most fully in Convoy.

When the stagecoach appears, Cable makes his first human contact since Taggart and Bowen abandoned him. The stagecoach society is hierarchically divided into drivers and passengers. Cable is most comfortable with the drivers, who, like him, are natural and active men. The passengers, a layman and his wife, put on civilized airs and quote scripture. They introduce the institutional aspect of spiritual life that Josh will, in part, foster. And the wife, who, as a prototype of the ladies of Dead Dog lives through her scolding voice and is blind to the life of the body, provides contrast for Hildy's sensual "ladiness." Cable's ability to morally interact with the drivers--in contrast to the passengers, whose morality is confined by their adherence to a moral law and who consequently relate to people and life via commands and orders--gains him not only a bottle of whiskey, but the man's belongings which, unlashed by the drivers, fall to the ground as the stage speeds away.

Cable gains, too, a new sense of his waterhole as a center of action. He learns from the drivers that it is in actual fact centered between two towns on a stage route that has no water. Cable's initial hunch proves accurate; all that he imagines becomes possible. Moreover, his characteristic distrust of people and his tendency to stay in one place aid the enterprise in the making. Staying becomes, in Cable's advance, a way to make the best of the springs--to develop and further bring out the powers of the center. Cable moves to "make do" with what has been provided for him--the springs, the goods from the stagecoach, and the cast-off articles of human journeys west that litter the immediate vicinity. As he sets about constructing a framework for the water, the camera eye breaks again into split-screen narrating.

Cable's activity and that of the camera eye bring forward within the narrative enterprise the intellectual powers associated with framing. As Cable begins the task of constructing the simple frames that will contain the water and enable him to work with it, the separate images that narrate his progress expose the cinematic frame as a feature within the movie's creative act. A boundary of cinematic space, the frame within the split-screen sequences comes to serve the narrative's temporal process. And further, through the emergence of Cable's ballad on the soundtrack, and through his sense of the movie as a ballad, Peckinpah "frames" Cable's advance within the artistic structure of "the ballad" concomitantly with Cable's building a framework through which the springs can become productive. That the ballad originates as Peckinpah's narrative act, and not as Cable's, is evident in the fact that Cable never sings "his" ballad or hears it. The actual ballad--heard only during the two split-screen sequences (this one and the earlier

one corresponding with Cable's wandering through the desert)--expresses the imaginative drive of the movie, as well as the imaginative condition of Cable himself.

As it emerges in this and the previous split-screen sequence, "framing," like "digging in," is a narrative act. It does not stop the images as the photographs in The Wild Bunch do, but moves them forward; nor does it confine images within a conceptual space. In exposing the frame structure as part of the narrating, Peckinpah shows how his narrative interest in Cable Hogue has moved beyond his interest in The Wild Bunch. What constituted the Old World story in The Wild Bunch--the method of law, characterization, words--is no longer in head-to-head conflict with the new. Cable Hogue begins Peckinpah's explicit attempt to get the old and the new working together, to make the best of the old and bring it into the service of the new. Through Cable's rudimentary efforts to contain the creative waters within the structures he builds, Peckinpah discloses a method wherein the "old" powers of intellect and design give form and direction to the "new" creative vigor. It is important to see, too, that while the structures Cable builds channel the water's energies, they have no value beyond their relation to the water--wheras the water, even in its natural form, has the power to promote natural life in the lizard and in the desert's vegetation. As Peckinpah imagines it in Cable Hogue, structure promotes the good only insofar as it aids creative advance.

Cable Encounters the Man of Words; The Camera Eye Allows for "Springing"

In building the first rude structures at the springs, Cable manifests the value in his name. As a "Cable," he has the talent for linking

together: not only does he link pieces of wood to form a housing for himself and the springs, his watering enterprise will form a new link between Dead Dog and Gila. In addition, he exerts the tensile strength appropriate to a "Cable." Capable of tension, Cable maintains his moral unity and coherence through his ability to adapt and to "give."[9] But Cable's character tests his tensile strength via its disposition to distance him from other people. When his first customers appear at the springs, Cable does not want to "give" at all; he wants money in exchange for his water.

Cable's concern for money--an abstract, not a moral, medium of exchange which distances him by mediating his connection with others--arises in part from the ego-beating he has taken from Taggart and Bowen. He shoots the first man who refuses to pay for a drink because that man, like Taggart and Bowen, not only ridicules his human value but also threatens his life. Furthermore, monetary exchange gains credence for Cable as he acquires a sense of ownership with regard to the springs. The voice that claimed "Me--Cable Hogue--I did it," now conceives the springs as "mine." Cable will not give of the springs freely as it gives itself to him--not even to his second customer, Josh, a man of the cloth.

With one exception (in the final phase of Cable's advance when Ben hands him a sack of gold in front of Taggart and Bowen), the coin that Josh gives over to Cable is the only money seen changing hands. In fact, the exchange of money in the movie constitutes a male act and it promotes the abstraction that inheres in those relations that proceed without female value. However, the way in which Cable adjusts to abstraction, the way he relates to other males, the way he fosters his intellectual growth, are all central to his human and moral advance.

Josh--who, dressed in black ministerial garb, cuts an abstract figure--provides Cable with an opportunity for evolving his rational male powers within a moral interaction.

In comparison with Cable, the Reverend Joshua Duncan Sloan emerges as a man of educated intellect. Specifically, he is a man of God's word; and as such, he has a facility with language that Cable does not have. Josh lives by and in his rhetoric. It is rhetoric that enables him to seduce the "sisters of the "Spirit"--the young, nubile parishioners that make up his flock--and to ingratiate himself with Cable. Cable's simultaneous attraction to and distrust of Josh's words, however, dramatizes the duplicity inherent in words as a medium of exchange--which, like money, favor abstraction. This attitude is later underscored by the banker's pragmatic assertion that a man of God is the first person he would not trust. Insofar as Josh asserts through his words and costume the authority of institutional religion over life, he elicits suspicion and, concomitantly, furthers division.

Josh's institutional character, however, is, like his name, a good-natured jest. He puts on the rhetorical garb of the preacher as easily as he turns from layman to cleric by reversing his collar. In addition, Josh's church--the Church of the Wayfaring Stranger--is, as he describes it, "a church of my own revelation." Josh adheres to his inner spirit, not to an external authority. Similarly, Josh's naming of "Cable Springs" and his description of it as a "cactus Eden," express not only the moral and imaginative drives that unite him and Cable in friendship, but also value the particular in language--its poetic and imaginative power. Most important, Josh's name for the waterhole articulates the movie's moral feat--that of visibly creating the method through which Cable "springs."

Josh's dual nature--manifest in the divisions he embodies between institutional man of God and moral man of spirit, between rhetorician and poet--indicates his intellectual predicament; but the degree of his predicament appears most clearly in his relation to the female image. Josh never becomes completely involved with a female because he approaches women through a persona. When he is with Claudia in a later sequence, his role as a preacher dominates their potential for center-to-center relating. Further, his ministrations to the female never come to fulfillment: Claudia's husband interrupts their attempted convergence, and Hildy violently rejects Josh's efforts to "save" her. Too, Josh is given to melancholy. For him, loving is lethal: "when you die, you get over it."[10]

As Josh and Cable sit talking at the Springs, Josh takes from his pocket photographs of some of the "sisters of the Spirit." Josh does not travel with an actual woman, but with pictorial representations of women. An intellectual narrator, he falls just shy of moral convergence with the female image. In Cable's eye, however, the photographs enact a stage in the process through which the female image is becoming concrete--from the female value active in the natural shapes of the lizard and waterhole, leading up to Hildy's appearance. Cable's eye directly and naturally responds to the nakedness of the pictures, which Josh glosses by reciting Scripture--"Naked we come into this world, and naked we go." What is intellectual and verbally mediate for Josh is, for Cable, immediate.

Cable's encounter with Josh brings into a new light Cable's relation with the male. While it begins with the abstract exchange of money and thus continues the dominance associated in the movie with

male interaction, it does not end in Cable's being left to die or in his killing someone. Their link as men whose spirits are imaginatively nourished by female value allows for the possibility of a moral and loving relation between them. Josh's intellectual presence also requires that Cable get smart and file a claim for the Springs. Although this action places Cable's egotistical tendency to claim within a legal framework, and consequently introduces the method of law at least minimally into his advance, it is necessary for Cable's continuing his free enterprise and fully tapping the moral potency entailed in "springing." And it gets him into town where, for the first time, he sees Hildy.

Cable and the Camera Eye Unite with Hildy's Image

The camera eye first sees Hildy opening a door and moving out into the world of Dead Dog. She emerges as a threshold figure, an image passing out of and into. For a moment she is framed by the geometrical shape of the doorway; then she moves from the shade of the covered walkway into the light of the open street. The curves of her hair and body, the pastel colors of her garments, and her graceful movement illuminate female value. A cut to Cable, who looks in her direction, and a cut back to Hildy, establishes Cable's initial visual attraction to her image. Concomitantly, Hildy's themesong, played simply by one string, emerges from the soundtrack. The immediate outcome of Cable's first look at Hildy is interest. His eye follows her image as she moves into the street. Further, his purpose for coming into town--to secure his legal claim to the Springs--recedes as a cause of action. All that matters is the lovely novelty of Hildy's image.

Cable and Hildy initiate convergence through eye contact and smiles. Subsequently, the camera eye sees them together in the frame. Cable, at the left, looks down at her from atop his horse and says, "Uh, please, miss. . . ." Hildy looks up at him and answers, "Yes?" In their initial meeting, verbal exchange follows and arises out of visual exchange. Cable's decorous request evolves his interest in Hildy within the social context of the town. Literally, though, he asks that she "please," and her response simply reiterates what her image has already affirmed--that Hildy is a source of pleasure, particularly to the eye.

The camera eye continues to narrate their visual convergence in the next two shots that alternately see Cable and Hildy through the other's perspective. First, the camera looks up to Cable, then down to Hildy. Sunlight whitens her hair and brings out the pink of her blouse. The shadows cast on her bodice accentuate its curving neckline that comes to a point at the cleft between her breasts. As Cable's voice asks, "Please, uh," the camera eye zooms in to a close-up of Hildy's breasts, and Cable's question fades off into an "uh-hummm." Cable's visual interest in Hildy's body--and particularly in her breasts, that portion of her anatomy that quite literally nourishes--completely disrupts his attempts at purposeful dialog. And in aligning its vision with Cable's, the camera eye centers the possibility for sexual union between Cable and Hildy.

Subsequent shots evolve the humorous embarassment that sexual possibility, dawning within a public setting, evokes for them. Cable cannot take his eye off her, and Hildy, aware of his staring, breaks the impasse by breaking eye contact. She lowers her eyes--demurely, flirtatiously--simultaneously affirming what Cable sees and providing

him with the opportunity to look away and regain his thoughts. Finding his voice, Cable says, "Well, hell, could you tell me where the land office is?" He looks back at Hildy and the camera again centers in Hildy's breasts. Her voice answers, "Well you're lookin' right at it."

The humor in Hildy's statement arises through the ironic convergence of her voice and Cable's vision. While their voices carry on their social roles--here they are mere acquaintances--visual activity initiates and enacts their imaginative adventure with one another. In the early phase of their meeting, what they say and how they see run counter to each other. In addition, their meeting interrupts their respective business in town and manifests in awkwardness while they adjust to the novelty in each other's image.

As their meeting draws to a close--Hildy has pointed out the land office and Cable's intention to file a claim is reasserting itself--neither is anxious to break contact. Hildy walks away, turns around and smiles at Cable. He watches her go. Intercut with the alternating shots of them are the close-up shots of Hildy's breasts that focus the imaginative drive within their meeting and converge it with Cable's renewed interest in the Springs. The possibility for pleasure--sensual, sexual, comedic--that centers in Hildy's image amplifies the moral promise entailed in "springing" and gives new form to the narrative by displacing the revenge plot and drawing Cable into a story of loving. In the next phase of the Dead Dog episode, the narrative will alternate between Cable's interactions with the males of the town--wherein he advances in his relation to language--and the continuing visual interaction with Hildy wherein Cable comes to know that she is a prostitute and imagines buying her favors.

Cable and the Cinematic Eye Imagine Human Value

Cable's interaction with Hildy will eventually enable him to incorporate female value into his interactions with other males, but in his early phases of growth, Cable advances male modes of relating via dominance and verbal skill. Having been duped by Taggart and Bowen, he is not anxious to be gotten the better of again--particularly by the town "fathers" of Dead Dog: the land office clerk; Quitner, the manager of the stagecoach line; and the banker. The intellectual evolution which contact with these men inspires in Cable also reveals that his growth as a distinctly human being--that is, as a man characterized by reason and the dual qualities of good and bad--occurs in relation to males, in relation to the social order, and in relation to language.

As a blossoming businessman, a promoter of free enterprise, Cable enters into public and social life--despite his reserve about "goin' in among 'em." His first public act, consequently, entails his entering the land office and asking to file a claim. Because of the small size of Cable's landholdings, the agent eyes him with some suspicion; nonetheless, he fills out the appropriate papers to establish Cable's ownership of the Springs. The difficulty comes when the agent asks Cable how to spell his name, "with an -e-l or an -l-e?" Sensitive to ridicule and to attempts to outwit him--he has already been embarassed by admitting to Hildy that he cannot read--Cable turns the question back on the agent: "If you're barkin' down on 'Cable,' wait'll you get to 'Hogue.'" Clearly, Cable's talent for making do is intellectual as well as physical.

In his move from the land office to the stage office, Cable demonstrates his ability to assimilate the complexities of language necessary

to carry out social and business life, and he shows that he has learned well at the land office. He announces himself as "Cable, with an '-l-e.'" In addition, he takes great pleasure from the emergence of his own wit, when, learning that the stage manager's name is "Quitner," he remarks, "I bet you ain't no quitter!" Cable has not, however, entirely mastered verbal communication. He pours water over Quitner's feet to explain that he has found water, and tears the claim paper in two pieces to show that he is willing to go half with Quitner in return for grubstake. Quitner, who has no eye--he cannot see the value in Cable or in his story, a failure which eventually costs him money--pegs Cable as a low-life character and throws him out.

Cable's problem, as he sees it, is that he is not taken seriously. People make light of him, including the children who tag behind him as he goes from office to office. Cable aspires to be valued as part of the human community, and it is that aspiration that breaks into view when he approaches the town banker. Frustrated by Quitner's rebuff, Cable launches into his story. His narrative abilities emerge as his self-conscious attempts at wit recede. Central to Cable's story is his sense of his power as an individual who "got up on [his] hind feet and walked straight to water, W-A-T-L-E." Not only does Cable continue to experiment with language, and thus evolve his intellectual faculties, he is moving toward an articulate statement of his own value. When the banker asks if he has any collateral, Cable responds, "I'm worth somethin', ain't I?"

Cable conceives of worth in relation to the "I," the ego or persona that determines social identity. Having been denied and negated as an "I" by other men--by Taggart and Bowen, by Quitner--Cable must

advance via the assertion and development of ego, and the clarification of his human soul. His urge, in the end of the movie, to hear Josh preach a funeral sermon that simultaneously pronounces the last word with respect to his character and commends his soul to God, carries the intellectual drive to know who he is to its ultimate conclusion in the movie. That drive functions morally for Cable in that through it he raises value and the perception of value as central within moral advance.

Cable's worth exceeds any rational conception of it. It exceeds the sense of abstract, monetary worth promoted by the Dead Dog businessmen who are skeptical of Cable's lack of "collateral," and it exceeds Josh's determination of human value according to the dualistic criteria of "good and bad." Cable's value issues from his imaginative and active talents--his ability to tap the creative waters, to dig in, to make do--and these are the talents which the social characters tend not to see or value sufficiently. When Cable leaves the bank, with his grubstake in hand, he is full of himself--full of a sense of his worth and his accomplishment--and his energy breaks out into a little dance. Passing townsfolk, however, squelch that energy, and the dance, with their critical looks. Despite his initial success with the banker, Cable still has to narrate a life that conjoins imaginative and moral value with social enterprise.

Furthermore, Cable himself tends to have an abstract sense of value, as is evidenced in his entrepeneural activities. He, too, in the Dead Dog episode measures his value by the money in hand; and what is more, he is coming to see Hildy in terms of monetary value. During his entrances and exits from the three Dead Dog establishments, Cable spots Hildy across the street as she ushers successive gentlemen callers either into or out of what appear to be her living quarters.

The first time, a man follows her up the stairs and through the door. The second time, Hildy escorts the first man down the stairs, then walks back up with a second man. The third time--following Cable's exit from the bank--he sees her standing in the doorway watching the second man leave. She no longer wears her street clothes, but a white bodice and underskirt. Hildy raises her eyes, sees Cable across the distance and smiles. She moves seductively against the doorframe, then enters and shuts the door.

Through this sequence of shots, the relation between Cable and Hildy alters from their initial, primarily sensory, interest in each other. As Cable watches Hildy from a distance and comments accordingly--watching the first man leave and the second man arrive, Cable verbally registers his interest by saying, "Hummm," "Huh?" and Hmh!"--he shows that he is inducing Hildy's professional identity as a woman of pleasure. Cable's logical assessment of Hildy's character allows for a new possibility: that he can become her customer and thereby enter into an abstract connection with her wherein her value to him becomes measureable in terms of money. His coming to know Hildy, intellectually and with regard to her social function in Dead Dog, threatens the visual and moral method of relating that had priority in their first meeting.

In fact, money becomes the focus for both Cable and Hildy as they eye each other across the street. When Hildy sees Cable, the camera eye cuts to Cable--who looks down--then cuts to a shot of the money in his hand. The next shot, a close-up in which Cable's head remains down while his eyes look up to see Hildy, connects her and the money in his mind. In the next shot, Hildy looks toward Cable, squints her eyes, then smiles. The camera eye cuts to see Cable's money, indicating that

Hildy sees it and makes the same connection Cable does. The logical cutting sequence enacts the logical connections they are making with respect to one another. But something more is happening.

From a shot of Cable smiling, the camera cuts to a close-up of the Indian face printed on his dollar bill. The dollar rotates from a diagonal to a horizontal position in the frame, the Indian face begins to grin, and its eyes cut right and then up. In another cut, the camera sees Cable look down, join in eye contact with the leering Indian, then look up toward Hildy as she disappears into the room and shuts the door. While money becomes a mediating factor for Cable and Hildy as they develop their social connection with one another, in the camera eye the image of the money becomes a new occasion for humor. The money's active image--its power to see eye-to-eye with Cable--reveals the power of Cable's imagination (and that of Peckinpah's), turned on to Hildy's image, to infuse the bill with novel life, so that what becomes narratively valued in their interaction and in the episode is not the possibility for an abstract connection between them, but the comedy that deflates their social pretentions and advances the surprising novelty in cinematic images.

The Camera Eye Strips Down to Images; Cable and Hildy Prepare to Converge

When Cable knocks on Hildy's door, she opens it and asks, "You wanna see me?" Her question focuses the visual method implicit in their first meeting. Cable does want to "see" her--in fact, his story entails his coming to see her like nobody ever saw her before. Despite Cable's reason for being there, and despite the fact that "reason" is emerging as a feature of their interaction, Hildy's lovely image overpowers

Cable's attempt to abstract her in characterization. The failure of Cable's rational male powers to dominate, even when, as Hildy's customer, he is in a position of authority, appears in his inability to answer her question. In the light of Hildy's image, words fail Cable, and her extraordinary female powers lead the way.

Hildy emerges, too, as the natural female. The decor of her room--its wallpaper and furnishings--associate her image and her imagination with flowers and natural, curving shapes. Throughout the sequence, she moves with animal grace. Moreover, she lives by her body. In contrast, Cable's rational powers come to the fore during their encounter in her room--he is increasingly shot as a "head" or in such a way that his head is framed by the pictures on her wall; and as the scene unfolds, his reason for coming to Dead Dog--to stake and protect his claim--reasserts itself. In the beginning, though, their emphasis is on stripping down and "coming clean" with each other.

Once Cable is inside the room, Hildy bathes him. For the first time the camera eye aligns her with the light and purifying qualities of water. Cable, stripped to his skin (to the surface that reflects light), remarks that the bath makes him feel "lighter"--and, in fact, his bare image <u>is</u> lighter than his dark-clothed image. Further, his lightness aligns him with the moral and cinematic value in light that Hildy's image and the image of water project. Stripping down not only occurs physically--the rest of the sequence up until the moment that Cable and Hildy get into bed with each other is given to undressing Hildy--it also happens verbally in their conversation. It works as the primary narrative action leading up to their convergence.

Despite the fact that Cable and Hildy have come together with the expectation of a business transaction, visual and moral activity advances their convergence. When they talk, they do not discuss price. Instead, they articulate their respective moral aspirations:

> Cable: Ya know, honey, if you're ever thinkin' of quittin' this job, I'm buildin' myself a place. Gonna be somethin'!
>
> Hildy: No. I've had enough of this damned desert.
>
> Cable: Not me. Not yet.
>
> Hildy: I'm on my way up. . . San Francisco is my next stop. And when I hit Frisco. . .
>
> Cable: Noisy claptrap town.
>
> Hildy: I'm gonna hit it in style.
>
> Cable: Two days and you're tired of it.
>
> Hildy: Tired of it? I ain't even got there yet. And when I do hit Frisco, I'm gonna be the ladiest damn lady you ever seen. . . . I'm gonna marry me the richest man in San Francisco. Maybe the two richest men. It's just a question of time.

Cable aspires to "be somethin,'" to stay in the desert and build himself "a place." Hildy imagines herself in the city, "in style," and respectably married. She aspires to "ladiness." In addition to expressing their imaginative plans and conjoining imaginative activity with visual action--Cable is undressing Hildy as they talk--the conversation clarifies the differences between Cable and Hildy that they must converge. Foremost, the difference emerges between Cable's emphasis on staying in place and Hildy's on moving with and in time. In the movie's final phase, Cable's advance will entail his assimilating Hildy's female value not only in performing an act of grace, but also in moving to leave the desert and go with Hildy. And the fact that he dies before he can go stems in large part from his failure to keep up with the progression of time.

Convergence in the Dead Dog sequence, however, centers in simple, physical union. Cable and Hildy, for all their talk, are preparing to make love. As they move through the room toward the bed, they advance toward completion of the male/female "dance" implicit in Cable's relation with the lizard and interrupted by the gunshot from Taggart and Bowen. However, this convergence is not to come to completion either. The camera cuts to a shot of a black-robed revival preacher holding a tent-meeting outside their window. His deep voice intones:

> God's pure and natural elements are being threatened by the devil. Yes, the devil seeks to destroy you with--MACHINES!

Immediately, the authoritarian voice engenders division between Cable and Hildy, and halts the imminent union of male and female. The preacher reminds Cable of Josh, who is back at the Springs, and makes him worry about marking his boundaries.

As the rational male powers come to the fore through the preacher's voice and through Cable's emergence as a "head"--in this part of the episode the camera shoots him behind Hildy's dressing screen so that only his talking head is in view--so does division as a method of interaction between Cable and Hildy. For the first time in the room, Hildy raises the business context of their meeting:

> Hildy: What about me, and my money?
>
> Cable: Fer what.

And Cable's answer, which denies that any transaction has taken place and reveals how possessive he is toward money, sets off the fight between them.

When the fight gets underway, the social setting of their meeting again comes into play. When Cable first enters Hildy's room above the saloon, he does so under the curious eyes of the saloon's

patrons. During his stay, the social arena recedes into the background music as he and Hildy become visually and imaginatively involved with one another. When their argument erupts, however, they are thrust back into the life of Dead Dog--in fact, they become its central attraction, its moving center. As the argument heats up and Hildy begins throwing things at Cable, voices from the saloon arise: "Atta girl, Hildy!" When she sails a whiskey bottle through her window and out into the street, the camera eye, following the bottle's trajectory, brings the town visually into the fracas as well.

With the introduction of the town as a third power within the event, Peckinpah's cinematic imagination reveals its genius for going beyond the method of division and dialectic that governs the argument between Cable and Hildy. They continue to fight, but much more is happening. The power of the image--particularly Hildy's image--to disrupt the conventional revival and excite action comes forward. In relation to Cable, she generates novelty, energy, and humor that spills over into and upsets the staid routine of Dead Dog. The argument between her and Cable, rather than dividing them, now relates them as lively images in contrast to the deadly voice of the preacher and the drab citizens who rotely enter the revival tent. Cable's and Hildy's conjoining activity--their argument, carried through in physical action, involves them further in the "dance" of male and female--in fact revives the revival. The argument upsets the institutional "spirit" opposed to "invention" and novelty when Hildy hefts her chamber pot at Cable and he steps on, and unfastens, the tent's restraining rope. The active powers of the image put the voices of abstraction literally in the dark and at the same time converge Cable, Hildy, the banker (who comes into the street to watch), and the movie's viewer in laughter.

The episode closes with the town in confusion, with Hildy's bottom--viewed between the barred rails of her balcony--switching resolutely in the faces of the "ladies" of Dead Dog, and with the prospect that Cable will return. The moral convergence of male and female that has occured visually in the sequence's physical farce must still be extended into the lives of Cable and Hildy. Hildy's image--which she and Cable begin to free via stripping down--must become further liberated from the bars that confine its female energies, as well as from the moralistic strictures of Dead Dog society. Cable, too, must advance his enterprise in relation to the town, which in this scene laughs at him, but whose commerce the Springs will serve. And Cable and Hildy still have to get together, to live up to the possibility in their images by consummating and bringing into view their imagined relation as lovers.

When Cable and Josh return to Dead Dog that night, Cable brings to Hildy a new chamber pot to replace the one she has broken. The particularity of the gift and its relation to the events of the day--and the fact that he does not give her money--evidence Cable's dawning moral relation to Hildy. The exchange between them--he gives her the gift, she gives him a smile--concretely advances the value in their initial meeting in the street and empowers them both not only to forget their argument, but to laugh at it. Moreover, the gift and the laughter it generates enable their sexual convergence to complete itself. Hildy hugs Cable and welcomes him into her room. The camera eye, however, remains with Josh outside the door. Their lovemaking occurs in Josh's eye as he peeks through the door (and in the viewer's imagination), and its imaginative power passes to Josh as he leaves the saloon and encounters Claudia.[11]

The Dead Dog episode completes the first phase of Cable's moral advance. As in The Wild Bunch, that phase promotes physical value. First, it assures Cable's physical life through his discovery of water. In addition, it accomplishes the rudimentary construction of Cable's "place" at the Springs. Moreover, it involves him in initial moral activity with Josh and Hildy. The encounter with Hildy's image begins in her sensual allurement as a body, erupts into the physical energies of the fight, and is imaginatively consummated in sexual union. Viewed in relation to the successive phases of advance in The Wild Bunch, the beginning of Cable Hogue further clarifies Peckinpah's inherent method for progressively evolving action and enacting transition.

Cable Hogue's next phase centers in developing the human relationships that have become possible in the first phase. It brings Cable and Hildy together in a new way, and involves Cable further in the social enterprise. In its obvious shift from the revenge plot to the romance between Cable and Hildy, it further elucidates structure as a feature within the movie's narrative advance. Most important, it accomplishes the "springing" of the Springs through the imaginative convergence of Cable's and Hildy's images, and through the moral correlation of voice--as it emerges through Hildy's song--and vision.

The Camera Eye Imagines the Flag; Cable Links into the Communal Frontier

Cable's discovery of the Springs is, in part, a spiritual event. It promotes the discovery within himself of the creative source of moral action. Cable persists, however, in not seeing the source within--in not seeing that water cannot be found "where it wasn't" and that "somethin'" cannot come from "nothin'." Instead of seeing his value, Cable intellectually asserts it, claiming that he is "worth somethin'."

Cable's urge to know his worth promotes his humanistic story--his desire for identity and for acceptance within the human community.

Before Hildy arrives at the Springs, Cable, Josh, and the banker watch Quitner and his men digging for water adjacent to Cable's claim. Quitner's idea is to locate his own spring so he will not have to contract with Cable to provide a watering stop for the stagecoach. Quitner, however, lacks Cable's imaginative talent for "walking straight to water." He finds none, and Cable signs the contract as Josh, the banker, and the drivers look on. Entering the contractual agreement, Cable legitimately enters the rational male order in a new way--without argument or disjunction, with mutual concurrence, and in a way that transforms that order. Moreover, once Quitner--the only disagreeable male present--leaves, Cable becomes the central figure in a new male group: one which advances friendship and moral union, and one which recognizes Cable's worth. The drivers, in honor of Cable's successful enterprise, which now becomes the official watering stop between Dead Dog and Gila, give him a gift--an American flag.

In relation to the previous sequence wherein Cable suffered the skepticism of the town fathers, this episode brings him into alignment with the life of the community. The flag's image links Cable with the larger enterprise of the New World in its aspect as a frontier, a land of beginnings. Arising as a particular gift out of the generosity of Ben and Webb, the flag (like Cable's gift of the chamber pot to Hildy) projects the individual value in its image and in Cable--rather than the abstract function as a symbol of law or government. No flags appear in Dead Dog; only this <u>one</u> appears in the movie at all, and it emerges in relation to Cable's entry into a community of individuals--

a community that, like the flag, only appears in the Springs and thus emerges narratively as an outcome of the Springs' moral and imaginative energies.

Those energies, moreover, become cinematically active as the episode draws to a close. When Cable receives the gift, he moves to be alone. As he walks away, Ben tells him that he will have to get a flagpole. Cable replies that he will build one himself, and in the next shot the new flagpole appears, the flag rising on it as Josh alone watches from a distance. The jump in time happens through the camera eye, and it transacts the creative power alive in the Springs and working through Cable's moral imagination--which, as soon as it imagines making the flagpole, allows for the actual image of the flagpole to appear.

Cable's union with the flag's image completes the narrative process begun in the movie's first phase to conjoin Cable with the human community. Opening to Cable's demoralization by Taggart and Bowen, the camera eye separates him from the competitive male group, involves him in the discovery of his autonomous worth, and brings him into a society, which, through converging its value with his, becomes transformed into the new community of individuals that celebrate Cable's enterprise at the Springs. The imaginative issue of that celebration, the flag's image signals a new era for the Springs, one of commerce and prosperity in which Cable is free to pursue his way of life--not in opposition to the communal value, nor in opposition to the land out of which he creates prosperity, but in correlative relation to the communal and American enterprise.

Cable and the Camera Eye Spring to Life; Hildy Gives the Light of Her Image

When Hildy arrives at Cable Springs--in a shot in which horse and rider move against the desert mountains and dark blue sky--neither Cable nor the movie's viewer knows who she is or whether the rider is male or female. Darkness obscures her features even in close-up, and not until she smiles and wisps of her hair catch the light does Cable recognize her. Simultaneously, her music emerges from the soundtrack; it aids the viewer's recognition of her and, more important, infuses into the Springs the female value that her image projects. Hildy's mysterious appearance also raises the question of identity. The introduction of recognition as a feature of Cable's and Hildy's relationship focuses their intellectual interest in coming to know one another, not as whore and customer, but as human individuals. As their time together at the Springs opens, there is no dominance and no arguing. Rather, they are eager to share one another's company and open to the human urgency that has aided their coming together.

Hildy's arrival, moreover, introduces a new awareness of time into Cable's space. Her image, already in motion as the scene begins, initiates the importance of time in the movie's intellectual phase. When she announces to Cable that she is only stopping over on her way to San Francisco, she reveals that, unlike Cable, she is coming to pass, not to stay. Her tendency to measure time in days, though, and to set limits on the time she will stay, additionally reveals in Hildy an abstract sense of time that life within the Springs will come to transform. In fact, the first such transformation occurs when Cable leaves her sitting outside his shack while he rushes in to clean the bedroom. The camera eye follows him, speeding up as Cable throws the accumulated

junk of his days at the Springs out the window in preparation for Hildy's entrance. She is shot in normal speed, waiting impatiently for Cable to finish. The brief episode concludes with her question and his answer: "Now?" "Now." The outcome of the moment of imaginative time is to bring Cable and Hildy into immediate experience, into the "now."

As in the earlier scene in Hildy's room, the conversation that ensues happens within a visual event. Cable and Hildy are again preparing for bed. The camera sees them apart from one another--Cable outside the bedroom grooming himself, Hildy inside shedding her cumbersome travel clothes. Their talk turns to who they are and why they are there--questions that seek to define their identity and value as human beings. Like Cable, Hildy is limited in her ability to see her own good. Asked to leave Dead Dog by "the good people of the town," Hildy seeks assurance from Cable that "it never bothered [him] none what [she is]." Hildy, in part, accepts Dead Dog's conception of her--a conception that marks her by her social function, or character, in the town and that thus labels her. Cable, however, allows her to see her individual human qualities--to see that she is "a human being" with her "own ways o' livin' and lovin.'"

Cable, too, still has doubts about his status within the human community. "Ya know," he says to Hildy, "sometimes out here alone at night. . .I wonder what the hell I'm doin' out here." Cable's question begins in his solitariness; it is another spiritual event. He is not dissociated from the desert--in fact, it is his relation within the desert, its mountains and night-blue sky through which Hildy have come to him, that prompt his spirit to "wonder." Cable is aware, too, that,

like Hildy, "in town" he is "nothin,'" whereas, in the desert, living within and advancing the power of the Springs, he has become "somethin'"--he has made "a good start," a moral beginning.

Speaking heart-to-heart and center-to-center, Cable and Hildy bring out the good in one another. Their moral loving promotes their individual and complementary value, and advances the cinematic method--the method of vision--through which they converge. Hildy opens the door to Cable. Wearing a white gown, she stands radiant in the threshold, a creature of light. Her soft hair shines. Cable sees her:

Cable: Now that is a picture.

Hildy: Seen it before.

Cable: Lady, nobody's ever seen you before.

Cable expresses his genius, and that of the cinematic imagination, for seeing Hildy new, for seeing her image. And in literally seeing her, in seeing the novelty in her image rather than her character as a whore, Cable transforms Hildy into a "lady"--not the moralistic sort that live in Dead Dog and shrivel up before Hildy's female vitality, but an imaginative creature within whom the good is immanent.

Converging in the threshold, Cable and Hildy join together what has been separate throughout their conversation--the male and female value in their images. Their convergence literally brings them into the threshold of a new possibility for the interaction of male and female. Their self-searching dialog gives way to the transforming powers of their images, and the sequence's closing--the shot of the closing door--dissolves into the new day via a close-up Hildy's hands rolling out dough in Cable's kitchen as she sings "Butterfly Mornings." Moral

loving between Cable and Hildy, enacted through the transformative act of "seeing" issues into life at once whole, imaginative, and new.

Cable and Hildy Prosper; The Cinematic Imagination Conjoins Image and Song

The "Butterfly Mornings" sequence joins Cable and Hildy working together in a creative enterprise--the enterprise of Cable Springs. In performing the work of the Springs--in gathering food, drawing water, building chicken coops and harvesting eggs, in resting and making love--Cable and Hildy allow the Springs to "spring" to life. Further, the sequence enacts the moment in the movie when Cable's and Hildy's images are most thoroughly integrated, the moment when their convergence is complete. That this integration occurs within the central phase of the movie indicates that it is not the "end" toward which the narrative moves, but a necessary part of Cable's evolution into something else. The "romance" phase, in bringing together male and female value, allows for Cable's assimilation of Hildy's qualities into his life.

Moreover, Hildy's female value visibly active in the Springs brings out and amplifies the imaginative power of its waters. In conjunction with her moral penetration of Cable's life, water comes abundantly and exuberantly into view. In one sequence of shots, Cable pours water into a long trough. The camera eye follows its downward movement until it pours into Hildy's receiving pail. In the song sequence's final shot, Hildy rests naked and shining in a large tub filled with spring water. Cable, the water's light rippling across his face, leans over and kisses her. Together, they finish singing the song. With the addition of Hildy's image into the enterprise of the Springs, Cable's structures--his shack and the wooden receptacles for water that he has built and that

have proliferated with the progression of the story--come to work for and through Hildy. The trough, the tub, the entire edifice erected in the desert, join in loving Hildy's image through their visual relation to her. Her image becomes the Spring's creative source, and so it is only appropriate that Cable direct the waters to her and that the waters of the Springs should, in their abundance, contain and give forth to Cable and to the eye Hildy's image.

The seamless integration of Cable and Hildy as moral powers--no longer are they visually or argumentatively divided from one another--issues into the subtle merging of song and cinematic image. Hildy sings to Cable, then he to her, then they sing together. Consequently, Hildy's song takes on productive visual life in the movie. Its lyrics, moreover, advance poetic language beyond Josh's Biblical rhetoric. "Butterfly Mornings" evokes images of nature and creation, and it enacts the moral process through which Hildy moves in relation to Cable--from the "butterfly mornings" and "wildflower afternoons" they share at the Springs, to Hildy's "big city" image in the movie's final phase when she appears in "lace wings."[12]

The thorough integration of Cable and Hildy, and of song and moving image, bring forward the more subtle imaginative powers, active within the cinematic eye, that drive their moral advance. Unlike the rational power that seeks to divide, to stop and spatialize action (a power working in Cable's character and in his plot to get revenge), the imaginative power narrates through whole and discrete units of action that evolve out of and into one another. The dissolve from closing door to Hildy's hands, and the other dissolve shots in the sequence,

visually enact their seamless union. The dissolves value--as does the following sequence wherein Cable's and Hildy's conversation about Taggart and Bowen proceeds intact over the course of several days--the coherence and continuity and transitional power of cinematic images. Furthermore, time, which Hildy introduced as an abstraction when she arrived at the Springs, becomes itself seamless and imaginative. Days are no longer counted or measured; they evolve naturally through the succession of butterfly mornings and wildflower afternoons.

Visually, the "Butterfly" sequence enacts the moral heart of Cable's story, just as Hildy's image centers the Springs' imaginative life. The sequence's imaginative feat comes in the actual center of the movie, and it is central to the camera's story of convergence. When the revenge plot emerges out of it, new creative conditions have likewise emerged through its imaginative union of Cable and Hildy: they are not the same after the "Butterfly" sequence as they are before it. Their continued growth entails their acting out of the new creative condition. It is not sufficient for Cable to assimilate female value in relation to Hildy or to "be a man" only in relation to a woman. Nor is it sufficient that Hildy become a lady only in Cable's eye. Complete growth requires that she become a lady in the world, and that Cable incorporate into his relations with men the female value that Hildy's image projects into his life. Specifically, he must come to forget the past and to move forward.

Cable's Image Still in the Center; The Cinematic Eye Advances

The cinematic eye, in its narrating of the "Butterfly" sequence, exposes the concrete method of transformation through which Cable and Hildy exchange value, and each becomes shot through or charged with the power of the other's image. The succeeding three episodes--the stagecoach's arrival, the jump-cut conversation between Cable and Hildy, and Josh's return--gradually extend life at the Springs beyond the central relation of Cable and Hildy. In doing so, these episodes prepare for the movie's final phase wherein the imaginative powers focused through Cable's and Hildy's moral passion disperse into the world beyond the Springs and into the camera eye's continuing narrative activity beyond Cable's death, and beyond the disappearance of human images in the movie.

Arriving an hour early, just as Cable and Hildy finish singing at the bathing tub, the stagecoach propels the lovers out of imaginative time and into rational, ordered time. Momentarily, the camera speeds up as Cable frantically searches for Hildy's robe and she runs inside half-naked. (At first, Cable absent-mindedly hands her a small towel with which to cover herself. His mind's tendency to know abstract time is literally absent from the imaginative way he relates with Hildy's image.) Intercut with the speeded-up shots of Cable and Hildy are shots of the stage drivers and their lady customers astounded and confounded by what they see happening. Their excitement registers the power of Hildy's stripped image to disturb the social order--especially the conventional order embodied in the "ladies" whose images are confined within the frames of their ladylike hats and the coach windows.

Furthermore, the convergence of male and female that the drivers and passengers witness contrasts with the categorical division between male and female on the stage.

With the passing of the stagecoach from the Springs, its value of rational order and rational time passes into the jump-cut conversation between Cable and Hildy. Cinematically, time continues to move imaginatively; Cable and Hildy continue to perform the life of the Springs together, and the camera eye makes no distinction between days--they continue to pass successively as they did during the "Butterfly" interlude without any sense of which day it is or how many days have passed. Dramatically, however, for the voices of Cable and Hildy, time becomes an issue. Hildy asserts her need to leave: "If I don't go now, won't be much use in goin' later." Cable responds that he will go "soon as they come." Through abstracting time, Cable and Hildy divide it into time that looks forward and time that looks back, and they reassert the plot of revenge--and with it, the design of the past in relation to Cable's image.

Moreover, in abstracting time out of their experience at the Springs, Cable and Hildy participate in the advance of the movie's intellectual phase. They expose the limit of the "now"--the present moment that does not look beyond itself, and that initiated their stay at the Springs--as a power for enacting change. Their idyll thus emerges as an intellectual and aesthetic vision performed through the poetic power of the song and in conjunction with the cinematic artifice of the dissolves, a vision that removes them from the world of time and change. The appearance of the stagecoach, their renewed interest in their plans, and finally, Josh's return--these three events, in bringing Cable and Hildy

out of the poetic life of the idyll and reinvolving them in literally narrative advance, enacts the cinematic eye's transition from the aesthetic to the moral imagination.[13]

As the narrating eye moves to involve Cable in life beyond the "now," that is, as it moves to complete the movie's intellectual phase and initiate the moral phase, Cable's self--his egotistical, rational character--more insistently asserts its power. Appearing first in the talk of revenge, the demon of self rears its head most viciously when Josh appears to come between Cable and Hildy. Josh arrives at the Springs already embroiled in a lover's triangle: Clete, Claudia's husband, is hot on his heels. Only through Cable's grudging good grace is Josh saved. But Josh brings with him the male competitive drive--evident in the "triangle" wherein male/female relating entails a struggle for dominance, and whose spatial "form" does not allow for growth--associated with Taggart and Bowen, and with Cable's characteristic tendency toward revenge. Josh does not become a serious rival for Hildy's affections, but his presence allows for the resurgence of male competition--which again emerges in relation to money, but also cuts at the heart of Cable's affair with Hildy.

At dinner that night, Cable resents the pleasure Josh takes in his meal, a pleasure which Josh expressly directs toward Hildy. Cable demands payment for the meal. Accustomed to Cable's generosity, Hildy is surprised: "You never charged <u>me</u> nothin.'" "That's because," Cable says, "you never charged me nothin.'" More than anything he could do, Cable's words expose the viciousness inherent in his male competitive drive; moreover, they expose the logic in words as the instrument of that drive, a logic that negates the visual and moral "charge" of "butterfly mornings." Through the instrument of male logic, Cable

destroys the aesthetic vision and divides himself from Hildy and from Josh. He assures their departure from the Springs, and prepares for his meeting Taggart and Bowen man-to-man.

Owing to the moral enterprise within the Springs and the movie, however, Cable's viciousness does not engender utter and irreparable division between him and Josh and Hildy. Their coherence and continuity as the three central human images who advance the movie's moral process is "saved" through Hildy's literal act of grace at the dinner table. Her prayer, in which she thanks God "for all this good food and that we can share it as one," emphasizes unity and the good. And through the tears that spring up in her eyes, she visibly accomplishes the scene's moral renewal. Although she makes Josh and Cable sleep outside that night, she goes to Cable later and wakes him from sleep to join her; and in the morning, after she has left, Cable and Josh part as friends.

Having evolved Cable's human identity--which emerges fully articulate in the closing shots of the intellectual phase when Cable newly asserts "Me--Cable Hogue--Me--Waiting"--the camera eye quickly moves to dispose of the aesthetic and dramatic modes through which it has accomplished Cable's emergence as a self. Initiating a montage sequence that enacts the rapid passing of time, the camera eye sees Cable fixed in the center of the screen, his image superimposed with shots of the stagecoach racing into and away from the Springs. The temporal quickening performs the cinematic imagination's transition into the movie's moral phase, and shows that it is advancing faster than Cable is. When the montage comes to an end and the camera eye opens into the moral

phase of the movie's advance, the camera eye's imaginative powers--particularly as they appear through the spontaneous generation of new images--have come completely into view.

Cable and the Cinematic Eye Visualize Taggart and Bowen; The New Divinity Becomes Visible

The moral phase opens in the dissolve from the time-passing montage sequence into a shot of three large tubs filling with water. The three tubs and the water they contain image the fullness toward which the cinematic eye's three-fold process is moving. In addition, they thematically evince the synthesis of male and female power as an outcome of the new phase's moral activity. The camera eye zooms out to show Cable standing behind the containers, his image centered within a turning windwheel that drives the waterpump. The pump's rhythmic droning and the sound of water emerge, followed by the approaching sound of the stagecoach. Cable turns and concomitantly the camera eye pans right to pick up the stage as it moves quickly through the desert. There is a slow zoom into the stage; then the camera cuts between it and Cable until the stage pulls into the Springs. The coach door opens and through it step Taggart and Bowen.

That there is no logical preparation for the men's appearance indicates that the powers of the intellectual phase have receded as the new imaginative power comes into action. In fact, Taggart and Bowen emerge as the outcome of the converging acts of visualization performed by the camera eye and by Cable, whose eye appears in close-up following Taggart and Bowen's exit from the stagecoach. Moreover, Taggart and Bowen do not direct this exchange as they did when they left Cable

in the desert. Their images, brought into visibility through the correlative alignment of Cable's and the camera's eye, provide the new moral condition that will allow Cable to act out his revenge and to dispose of it. Within the new moral condition, which visual power directs, Taggart and Bowen--who characteristically do not see either the value in the desert (which to them is only sand) or the value in Cable--are at a distinct disadvantage. Foremost, they cannot see that Cable has changed. Dressed in a suit, clearly prosperous (Ben hands Cable a sack of gold), articulate and in full possession of himself, Cable nevertheless seems to them to be the same Cable they left in the desert. And they are so blind to the change before their eyes, that they soon return to the Springs to repeat their scheme of robbing and killing Cable.

However, repetition, as a mode of action that values the past, has no force within the new moral phase which naturally favors novel action. Taggart and Bowen, when they return, are in for a surprise. First, Cable--who is nowhere in sight--plays upon their greed and leaves a few coins lying in the sand. Not until they have dug themselves into a pit looking for Cable's gold does Cable himself emerge--first as a voice from outside and above the pit, and then as a close-up head in the camera eye. The close-up, which shows his head moving against the blue-gray background of the desert, visually recalls the God's-eye view in the opening sequence wherein Cable's fetal-curved figure, seen from above, blurred into the blue-gray sand. No longer small and indistinct, Cable's image and his assertive self have come forward. He, rather than the camera eye, takes the God's-eye view toward Taggart and Bowen, and becomes what he has not yet been in the movie--a male with consummate authority.

Cable's new godlike power clarifies the direction his moral advance will take. Immediately, it clarifies his relation to, and the concomitant growth of, the "divine" power working in the movie. The movie's first phase promotes divinity as a power external to Cable via the transcendent God to whom he prays and the representatives of God on earth, Josh and the Dead Dog preacher. In the second phase, divine power becomes explicitly associated with Hildy through her prayer, and implicitly active in the aesthetic union of Cable and Hildy. Now, in the beginning of the third phase, the divine power becomes cinematically attributed to and immanent within Cable through the close-up shot and through his dominance of Taggart and Bowen. Furthermore, Cable's new link with the divine power focuses the evolutionary event in which he is involved. Having emerged in relation to the lizard and the natural, animal world, Cable's growth requires that he develop his human worth. As a human act, however, revenge orients Cable to the past and promotes physical retribution against Taggart and Bowen. Cable's moral leap thus entails his moving beyond the Old Testament divinity within him that seeks judgment and vengeance, and becoming--through the assimilation of female value--the new god of grace. The divine genius within Cable works, in the movie's moral phase, to mature his humanity.

Cable matures as a male when he shoots Taggart in self-defense. That act, which gives full credence to the self he has struggled to create, simultaneously destroys the last proponent of the male order of dominance and disposes of the necessity for revenge. Bowen, apart from Taggart, presents no threat to Cable. Stripped of defenses as well as clothes (Cable orders him to undress and head out into the desert), Bowen looks much like the earlier Cable--grizzled, dirty,

childlike. His image promotes comedy and a human vulnerability shared by Cable, Hildy, and Josh--all of whom have appeared at one time or another in their underwear. To shoot Bowen, or to carry out further retribution, would demean Cable; it might advance his power as a dominant male, but it would not lead to his maturing as a humane "man." Cable's maturing, however, and his conversion into the god of grace, does not come through his conscious act. Cable pursues Bowen to the edge of the Springs fully intending to send him unprotected into the desert. The conversion comes as an act of grace through the camera eye when it gives birth to the colorful and novel image of the automobile. Jouncing gaily across the sand, the car's image turns Cable's eye to its new life, and simultaneously turns his mind from revenge.

Altering the relation between Cable and Bowen, the car advances itself as a deus in machina, a divine power immanent within the image of the machine--the machine not objectified, but imagined.[14] It is not the sinister mechanism referred to by the Dead Dog preacher as a destroyer of "God's pure and natural elements," but a new relation of technological powers that carries within it--in the images of the brightly dressed ladies and gentlemen who ride in it--the synthesis of male and female powers. Opening Cable and Bowen visually to a new possibility, the car's image, when it leaves, leaves them transformed. In light of its novel value, the old dramatic tensions no longer make sense and they are exposed as powerless to move the adventure forward. Bowen, tears welling in his eyes, repents; and Cable, telling Bowen to "bury" Taggart, buries the revenge plot once and for all. Cable's forgiveness, which he performs rather than states, occurs imaginatively and spiritually; and as an event made possible through the miraculous intervention of the

car's image, Cable's conversion from god of vengeance to god of grace reveals that the central creative act of the moral phase is no longer his advance, but the actual appearance of the new imaginative power.

Hildy Metamorphoses Through Cable's Eye; The Cinematic Eye Centers in Cable

Another outcome of the car's appearance is a narrative focus on the relations of the central human figures in the movie to the new technology visualized in the car. Both Cable and Bowen declare the extent of their ability to "go with" the new when they see the first car. Cable observes that it "don't look that good," and he dismisses the automobile as "the next fella's worry." Bowen, who has "seen one before," demonstrates a greater openness to the new. When the second car appears, more splendid than the first, Cable agrees with Ben (who, with Webb, has arrived at the Springs in the stagecoach) that it is "ugly damn lookin.'" Cable's visual genius, his power to see novelty, is failing at the same time that the imaginative acts of the camera eye are increasing. Specifically, Cable fails to see, until she opens the car door and removes her elegant hat, that the quick new power loose in the Springs is in the process of giving birth to Hildy's image.

Alighting from the car, arrayed in luxuriant green brocade, her golden hair piled in rich curls, Hildy stands splendid and radiant for all to view. "That there lady," says Cable, "is Hildy--the ladiest damn lady I ever seen." Opening her arms wide, the long sleeves of her dress unfolding, Hildy moves to him on the "lace wings" of a butterfly. She enacts the eye's achievement in The Ballad of Cable Hogue, and in taking into her image all the qualities narrated in the "Butterfly" sequence and in her song, she transforms the aesthetic value of the

intellectual phase into a visible moral fact. Moreover, Hildy has achieved all the moral and imaginative value entailed in Cable's vision of her ladiness without the restrictions of social convention. She is married, but widowed, and thus free to move from San Francisco to New Orleans--a city literally "new"--and though having acquired respectable status, she does not take on a married name or title. What she gains by way of wealth, she transforms into the splendor of her image, and that she spends freely in the eyes of all who see her.

Furthermore, Hildy's car, whose green color matches that of her dress, contains and gives off the power in her image. Like the first car that burst suddenly into life in the Springs, Hildy's car advances the machine as a power that serves imaginative advance. Constructed via mechanical connections and fueled from an external source, the automobile, in its relation to Hildy, images a method whereby the rational powers come to serve and promote the finer imaginative power. In addition, the automobile entails a more sophisticated correlation of powers than does Cable's rude technology. It combines mechanical, electrical, and chemical powers, whereas Cable's structures relate various physical powers--those of the human body, of wind and water--with the mechanical power of the apparatus he has built. Hildy's and Bowen's alignment with the more sophisticated technology--and Josh's (he appears soon on a motorcycle)--reveals that they are becoming the agents of the new, while Cable's power is dissipating.

The evolving relation between Cable, Bowen, and the new power converging in Hildy's image and in that of her car, completes when Cable is run over. That action begins with Bowen's curiosity about the car. He looks at it, moves around it, attempts to calculate how many horse's

worth of water it needs, and finally rides on its running board as the driver moves it to the top of the hill. Cable, on the other hand, having imagined leaving the Springs and intent upon kissing Hildy, ignores the car. Foremost, and fatally, he ignores the mechanisms of the car. When he places his luggage in the seat, he inadvertently releases the brake and the car begins rolling downhill directly toward Bowen. Cable sees the impending accident, pushes Bowen out of the way, and wrestles the car head-on. No match for its strength, Cable falls and the car runs over him.

Cable's limit as a narrator in the movie's moral phase emerges in his ignorance of the new technology that embodies a more complex rational power than Cable possesses. His advance--from the man living solely within nature in the movie's opening shot, to the man primarily concerned with simple human worth (as it is expressed in the simple structures he builds at the Springs and in his rudimentary social skills)--does not bring him as far as Hildy in relation to the new technology or as far as Josh in relation to language and social intercourse. Cable's growth from pre-rational to early-rational man within a narrative already advanced beyond the powers of reason brings him up short for making the transition through moral phase intact. His cruder story, however, does enable the camera eye to clarify the subtler power of creative advance. The cinematic imagination works through Cable as a central image because Cable, through his talents for "making do" and "digging in," evolves the powers of the center.

Cable Imagines His Death; The Cinematic Eye Frees His Genius

In the moral phase of the movie, transformation begets transformation with ever-increasing vigor. The image of the first car, in effect, initiates a series of narrative quantum leaps--sudden jumps from one discrete moral "orbit" to another--whose issue will become the death of Cable and his humanistic story and the birth of the new cinematic adventure. Cable's conversion, the appearance of the stagecoach, the appearances of the second car and of Hildy, and later, of Josh, are all "quantum" events that generate new moral conditions. Moreover, owing to its quantum power, imagination becomes active within the human agents--specifically, within Cable--and displays its power to immediately create and make visible. Cable imagines Hildy, and her image--first "recalled" in his memory via a flashback and then immediate--appears. Cable imagines leaving the Springs, and when Hildy arrives and asks him if it is time for him to go, he answers that he has "already left." Foremost, Cable imagines his death, and he dies.

Cable's injury under the car's wheel is not a bodily, but a spiritual one. He does not cry out in pain, nor is there any visible evidence that he is physically hurt. When Hildy runs to him and asks him if he is all right, he says, "Yep," starts to get up, then says, "Nope," and lies back down. In the next shots, when he appears carted outdoors in his bed, Cable still does not appear to be fatally wounded. Not until he states outright that he is dying does the fact become apparent. What is passing away, however, is not Cable's body, but his characterization and its failure to negotiate the new. When he does not get up, he reveals that his value as a central image in the camera eye is coming

to a close. Simultaneously, he prepares for the full expression of his humanistic story via Josh's eulogy.

It is Josh, the man of words, who comes to characterize Cable and articulate his worth in human terms. Narrating Cable's story of growth through his rhetoric, Josh paints Cable as "a prophet of old" and a "dim reflection" of the Lord who has "carved himself a one-man kingdom" out of the wilderness. He emphasizes the good and bad in Cable--"Yes, he might have cheated, but he was square about it. Rich or poor, he gouged them all the same"--and allows that "when he died. . .there wasn't a man he was afraid of." Through his language, Josh elevates Cable above his rude origins and elevates language as a power of transformation. Finally, though, it is not Josh that transforms Cable, but Cable who transforms Josh. Cable imagines the eulogy as a living event. When Josh begins to preach, Cable is alive, and Josh's exaggerated movements and spiritually-inflated language promote humor. But when, in the middle of the sermon, Cable dies, Josh's eloquence becomes a new event. Then his words acquire the power not only to memorialize, but, in suggesting that the Lord "not take him lightly," to narrate the full dignity of Cable as a man.

Cable's final imaginative act--his dying--thus not only completes his growth as a human character, it allows for transformation to occur beyond him. Through the new moral value infused in Josh's words via Cable's death, Josh, Hildy, and the small community of individuals who survive him, acquire new human worth as well. They stand with dignity around the small gravesite, and as Josh's words come to an end, they move slowly, one-by-one, away. The last close-ups in the movie, first, of Josh, then of Hildy, focus the value in human character--Hildy's

achievement as a lady, and Josh's as a voice--that has become possible through Cable's human evolution.

Words, however, only end the story of "Cable Hogue," the character. They do not end the movie; nor do they give rise to Cable's death, which itself occurs as a cinematic event. As Josh preaches to the living Cable, the camera eye sees his image backgrounded by the sunlit sky. A jump-cut reveals Josh from a slightly lower angle--the angle of vision appropriate to Cable from his bed--and this time preaching against a darkened sky. From the soundtrack emerge the sounds of shovels against dirt. In the space of the cut, Cable's image has disappeared, and the grave, marked by a white cross has become visible. It is important that Cable himself never appears dead.[15] When his character dies, as it has been doing since he gave up revenge as a mode of action, Cable loses his power as a concrete image; but his visual genius, surviving across the cut,passes into the new activity of the camera eye.

That Cable's spirit is alive and active in the Springs becomes humorously evident when, as the stage is about to leave, Bowen runs to it to catch a ride into town; he does not want to spend the night alone at the Springs. Cinematically, however, the disembodied genius passes into the action of the images--particularly in the rhythmic divergence, first, of the human images away from the gravesite, and then of the three vehicles--the stagecoach, the motorcycle, and the car--out of the Springs. And finally, Cable's genius--the divine power immanent within his image and within the images that still move--converges completely with the moving camera eye. Free from the story "of Cable Hogue," the cinematic imagination now moves to carry through the transformation of

its narrative center. Roaming the Springs, the camera eye discovers a new image of life--a coyote who wanders in and drinks from the water. The coyote's image evolves the movie's opening shot of the lizard, whose cold-bloodedness and limited mobility are advanced in the coyote's warm-bloodedness and its increased powers of physical movement and moral action. Led forward by its more acute sense of vision, the coyote browses among the structural remnants of Cable's life, seeking out what interests it and promoting the moral talent of "making do." Its image centers the narrating eye within the creative source of the Springs, and makes visible the continuing creative activity within that source.

Moreover, the source--the narrative "waters" out of which have sprung the movie's images (and, in fact, all the movie's images spring from and grow out of the lizard's image, which acts as a potent source of nourishment not only for Cable but for the camera eye as well) has changed. Having evolved through Cable's moral advance the structures that contain and concentrate the water's power to do work, the cinematic eye moves to center in a new view of those structures, one that sees them whole and growing dim in the evening light. Simultaneously, the closing strains of Josh's song rise on the soundtrack: "I'll see what tomorrow will bring." Together with the movie's new image of Cable's work, and with the continuing narrative power that issues from and seeks out its own beginning, the song's lyrics focus the narrative enterprise--the "ballad"--in the visual act of looking forward.

Peckinpah's genius, morally converged with Cable's, and therein free from his story, directs the camera eye into the next narrative advance, the next movie through which it will further evolve and pass on their mutual passion to see. In the movies that appear between The

Ballad of Cable Hogue and Convoy, Peckinpah will continue to transform the genial power that emerges through Cable's moral advance, until in Convoy that power emerges as the central and centering focus of the whole movie. In coming to see Cable and his story "lightly," as an image active within a medium of light, Peckinpah advances through and beyond Cable's specific character, beyond the Ballad's humanistic and verbal story, and moves toward visualizing the cinematic value of "convoying."

Notes

[1] In a review of The Ballad, Tom Milne sees Deke, not Freddie, as Cable's predecessor: "The difference is that the hero of the new film is no longer Pike Bishop but Deke Thornton; not, in other words, the outlaw. . .but the one who accepts change. . . ." (See Milne, p. 50) While Milne's statement fails to take into account the change in which Pike is involved, his distinction between Pike and Deke focuses the outcome of their respective ways of life, and rightly links Cable with the non-antagonistic method of Deke.

[2] Critics often see Peckinpah's images as promoting "dance," an art of movement. In a review of The Wild Bunch in Figures of Light (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 181, Stanley Kauffman discusses the violent montage in terms of Peckinpah's "interest in the ballet, not the bullet." In an essay on Convoy, Frank Burke calls a particular truck-action sequence the "dissolve dance," a term I borrow from him in the succeeding chapter. (See Frank Burke, "Peckinpah's Convoy: The Metaphysics of Motion," University of Manitoba, unpublished manuscript, no date.) The recurrence of "dance" as a term expressive of Peckinpah's images attests to his visual artistry, his genius for seeing and narrating the action in images.

[3] In the interview with Farber, Peckinpah describes this change in his imaginative sense of the Bunch. First, he comments on their character as killers: "I wanted to tell a simple story about bad men in changing times. . . .[V]iolence is an end in itself to these people." Later, he remarks, "The strange thing is you feel a great sense of loss when these killers reach the end of the line." (See Farber, pp. 8-9.)

[4] The narrative source of Peckinpah's art in The Ballad is, most obviously, the Western movie, the form he had worked in almost entirely up to The Ballad. His remark that The Ballad is "about people in the West, but it's not a Western," indicates his talent for imagining beyond the conventions of form and thereby transforming his own narrative

beginnings. The movie's title also suggest its relation to ballad or song as a narrative form--a possibility that becomes actual in Convoy, which was, in fact, a song before it was a movie. (The quote appears in Farber, p. 9.)

[5] The lyrics to the first verse of Cable's song are as follows:

> Tomorrow is the song I sing,
> And yesterday don't mean a thing.
> Today will be the next day's dawn,
> And I'll still be here grinnin' when the mornin' comes.

Like his image, the song's lyrics look forward to new beginnings.

[6] In this detail, the shot recalls Freddie's miraculous appearance at the end of The Wild Bunch.

[7] Cable misses, in fact, what the crew of Cable Hogue saw. In a full-page newspaper ad, those crew members who survived rampant firings during the movie's production, proclaimed: "It's been a hell of a ball working with Sam Peckinpah. We found it where it was." (See Garner Simmons, A Portrait in Montage: Peckinpah [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976], p. 118.)

[8] The growth of the water is an imaginative event. While the water is referred to as a "spring," it never appears physically springing forth out of the ground. Rather, it "springs" imaginatively, across the cut, through the creative act of the camera eye. Its method of growth and "springing" previews that of the convoy after the jailbreak episode when the imaginative powers are moving out front and trucks appear out of nowhere.

[9] In the power to "give," Cable prefigures Rubber Duck.

[10] Of the three songs, Josh's is most poignant. The lyrics,

> Wait for me, sunrise.
> Bring me some new skies.
> Gonna stop all my wandrin'
> When I see what tomorrow will bring,

focus on the new day, as Cable's song does. But in performance, Josh's song evokes a more plaintive tone--a sadness, a wish, perhaps, that the wandering would stop. This song closes the movie; then, however, it ends on a more rousing note, and its vigorous closing crescendo shifts its emphasis from poignancy to the new possibility of "tomorrow."

[11] The imaginative power of Cable's and Hildy's sexual encounter moves into Josh's meeting with Claudia, but does not become actually consummated there either. Rather, it becomes another occasion for humor and for the camera eye's getting full of itself and erupting into fast action when Clete, Claudia's husband, surprises her and Josh.

[12] Hildy's song is the most beautiful of the three;

> Butterfly mornings, butterfly mornings
> Butterfly mornings, and wildflower afternoons.
> On the wings of a butterfly, I woke to my morning,
> On the beams of a sunflower, on the day I was born in,
> On the petals of a wildflower, with the sun at high noon,
> I'll be living in butterfly mornings and wildflower afternoons.
>
> Gonna find you in a cantaloupe, down there sitting on a seed,
> Gonna hear your footsteps underneath the weeds,
> Gonna string you up some dandelions, you'll wear 'em as beads,
> You'll be dancing in lace wings and satin on a big city
> sign that reads,
>
> Butterfly mornings and wildflower afternoons.

Lyrically, through its imagery, it promotes the movie's loveliest moment of verbal "springing."

[13] In his chapter on Cable Hogue, Seydor sees the idyllic world of the Springs during Hildy's visit as "the world elsewhere," a world distinct from the "real" world outside the Springs. Seydor's sense of two separate worlds is place oriented, or spatial--and thus advances an intellectual bias. He posits two places, one where life is "real" and thus fallen and mutable; the other that is wholly imaginary and therefore unreal and subject to perishing when the real world intrudes on it. The "world elsewhere" is ideal and "too good for true." This spatial point of view allows only momentary intersection between the two worlds, and consequently allows no possibility for infusing the power of the "world elsewhere" into the quotidien world of reality--no way, ultimately, to accomplish transformation within life. In his view, art corresponds to "the world elsewhere," the "world of illusion and vision, existing only within the confines of the story, play, or film," and as such, it can act only as a momentary stay against the oppressiveness of the real world. Seydor's view of the Butterfly Mornings sequence, and of Peckinpah's vision in The Ballad, limits the possibilities of art and imagination for enacting change. Peckinpah, however, through his powers as a visual narrator, promotes not a "place" oriented method, but an "event" oriented method that allows for the immanence of these "worlds" within one another, and with it, the power of art in life. Through such a method, which is the method of the movies, the dual "worlds" are done away with as distinct "places," and they become features of one event, the creative event in process. Art then occurs within life, as an imaginative or genial power, not as an illusory counter-reality. In such a method, art is not for art's sake, but for life's sake. (See Seydor, pp. 157-180.)

[14] Peckinpah expresses his imaginative relation to the machine--and to one machine in particular--not only through the machines that appear in his movies, but in his life: "I detest machines. The problem started when they discovered the wheel. You're not going to tell me that the camera is a machine: it is the most marvelous piece of divinity ever created." (Quoted in Seydor, p. 250.)

[15] The fact that Cable's dead image does not appear in the movie promotes Peckinpah's narrative sense that images do not die, and that death, as an end, in fact, cannot be imagined. Cable does not, visibly, die; he simply disappears as an image. Only Josh's words enact Cable's "death."

CHAPTER THREE

GETTING AWAY ON GASOLINE AND SPIRIT-- THE NEW BUNCH CONVOY

Coming On

In the last phase of The Ballad of Cable Hogue, when Cable's genius merges with the cinematic eye, the new imaginative power--though active and generative--has no central human image with which to unite and through which to initiate a new moral advance. In a sense, the cinematic eye has spent its energies in creating Cable's story and in freeing his spirit from characterization so that the new genial spirit can become immanent within the camera eye's completing acts of vision. Cable's genius, set free, sees the structures his moral evolution from pre-rational to early-rational man has brought into view, but it comes to an end with that image. Without Cable himself as an active agent within the world, possessed of all the powers of action--physical and intellectual as well as imaginative--the process set going in The Ballad of Cable Hogue cannot go beyond the feat that has been accomplished. Dematerialized and lost as an image, Cable can no longer act as a human agent of the camera eye's narrative advance. At the same time, the passing of his imaginative power into the cinematic activity in the movie's closing shots transforms Peckinpah's narrative powers. In imagining The Ballad, Peckinpah has creatively achieved what he can through Cable; he has made the most of Cable, and moved on.

Peckinpah's story emerges, through The Wild Bunch and The Ballad, as the story of passing on the new imaginative power through central human images that, within their moral evolutions, clarify and add to the new power's ability to act and enact change. In these two early movies, the central human agents, the Bunch and Cable, begin with limited powers of vision. Their ability to see, to look forward and narrate visually, often runs counter to their characterization, and their advance entails their coming to work with the new moral power through killing off the "old" rational power that involves them in division and conflict. The new power, however, survives the central human figures and passes into Peckinpah's cinematic eye. It is active and potent in the "endings" of both movies, and it is seeking--especially in The Ballad--images through which to begin the new advance. Peckinpah gets as far, in The Ballad as freeing the new power and visualizing it through and in a literal act of vision, but he has not yet imagined a new central human image who is capable of evolving the genial spirit, surviving as an image the self-destruction necessary to visibly release it into the world, and coming on through into the new moral universe its advance makes possible.

Peckinpah's next three movies--Straw Dogs, Jr. Bonner, and The Getaway--continue Peckinpah's drive to imagine the agent of the new genius who can live through the complete moral process. Together, the early movies--including Ride the High Country and Major Dundee through The Getaway--give birth to the moral hero, the "movie star," who, aligned with Peckinpah's visual genius, evolves the narrative power in images (which, like stars, are light events) to spend themselves transforming and making visible the method of creative action. Coming in part out

of a literary tradition wherein character and plot reign supreme, Peckinpah's "stars," his central human images--and the movies themselves, as a narrative medium--struggle to transcend and transform their narrative past. Neither Peckinpah nor the human figures he imagines, however, begin in the old tradition; if they did, they would never get out of it. Likewise, the movies, as a medium, while they may draw upon literary forms--and while some movie-making imaginations may in attitude give priority to literary values--do not and cannot begin with words, but with the qualitatively and radically new narrative power in moving color images. It is Peckinpah's visual orientation, inherent in his medium, that allows him to work with old narrative forms--with dramatic structures, with the generic Western, with what from a literary perspective appear to be conventional characters and plots--and to transform these into a new narrative, a narrative of the new, that foremost values change, transformation, and creative advance. And it is the visual genius of his central images that involve them in a moral process through which they create the new possibilities for action alive in their stories' completions.

When The Ballad of Cable Hogue comes to "the end," it enacts the last movie in which Peckinpah imagines making an "end" through the conventional literary device of literally naming it. The Ballad therein not only disposes of Cable's humanistic story, but empowers Peckinpah, in his next movie, to shed one more of the literary frames that artificially separates art from life. And in shedding "the end," and with it the old narrative sense of making ends and of closure, Peckinpah reveals that his cinematic art is an art of life that makes beginnings. The beginning that he makes in The Wild Bunch and The Ballad evolves

the ability of the central human images to "go with" the new imaginative power--literally, to "convoy." The Bunch and Cable discover the moral source of action, clarify it, advance it as far as possible, and pass it on amplified, more refined, and better able to achieve new moral feats. But while they give birth to the new morality, they do not completely evolve its possibilities. In this way, they enact necessary phases in Peckinpah's narrative enterprise that completes in the story of Rubber Duck. The Duck not only brings the new visual morality into view, he lives out of it and visibly declares its method of "convoying," which, once seen, drafts the old narrative powers into its action and equips them to make the moral leap into the new visible creation.

Centering

> Breaker one-nine. This here's the Rubber Duck. Anybody got a copy on me out there? Come on.

When his voice breaks through the CB channel in the opening shots of Convoy, Rubber Duck emerges as a human agent who complements visual activity and as a visual narrator, even though he is not yet an image. His voice, issuing from within the ongoing visual event--the truck's birth as an image in convergence with the already moving camera eye, an event that performs the movie's first act of convoying--"goes with" the generative act of the camera eye. Looking out ahead for another individual with whom to "come on," Rubber Duck focuses the moral inclinations of his eye to become active and to seek out novelty, and he assists in the birth of Peckinpah's new narrative adventure.

As the central human agent within the movie's birth, Rubber Duck brings forward more completely what Peckinpah's eye is working out in

The Wild Bunch and The Ballad via Pike and Cable. Like the camera eye in the beginning of Convoy, Rubber Duck begins on the move, an imaginative nucleus within the truck's moving image. In emerging as a voice and name before becoming an image, however, Rubber Duck performs the movie's first intellectual act. Characteristically, the intellect and its medium, language, perform division--and the Duck's voice does "break" into the visual event to name him and thus differentiate him from other individuals. But in the beginning, the Duck's intellectual activity does not violate the moving color image as Pike's verbal activity does in the beginning of The Wild Bunch when his first words utter an authoritative and divisive command, negate movement, and incite violence against individuals. The Duck's words allow him to do verbally what his eye and Peckinpah's imagination are already doing: look forward to the next occasion of "coming on."

The Duck's imaginative use of words appears, too, in his name and the way in which it occurs. With Cable, he shares an early impulse to identify himself. Cable's concern with his human identity advances him beyond Pike, a man of action whose intelligence mostly directs the Bunch's physical movements and does not, until the final phase of his growth, turn explicitly toward deliberate moral action. But Cable's assertion of identity, particularly when he first sees the water, tends to claim for voice and consciousness the eye's imaginative discoveries; and it leads him into the plot of revenge and the humanistic story, both of which look to the past. The Duck, working from the beginning with rather than against the eye's genius for looking foward, involves himself "out there" beyond the egocentric bind Cable's voice gets him into. Moreover, the Duck's name--actually "Rubber Duck" is the first

in an evolutionary succession of names for the Duck's image--values new qualities beyond those of structural linking suggested in "Cable." As a "handle," a physical projection that enables him to be gotten hold of and related to as a discrete individual, "Rubber Duck" initiates identity in a rudimentary form. In addition, as an animal name, it brings out the Duck's mythic or totem value: duck-like, he can "stay calm on the surface and paddle like the devil underneath." And combining vegetative with technological power--and thus, with his animal power, equipping him with the powers of physical life--"Rubber" promotes the Duck's plasticity and resiliency which render him a more capable human agent for change than either Pike or Cable--both of whom, owing to a characteristic inflexibility they cannot completely overcome, die. More evolved as an intellect--his voice neither commands nor claims--and open to the possibilities coming into view as he moves forward, Rubber Duck lives and advances life through the power to "give" his name imaginatively enacts.

More important than his simply emerging as a voice is the fact that Rubber Duck emerges as a voice and a name in the process of becoming an image. Through this process--which occurs in the opening sequence with Melissa and the trooper--he not only appears for the first time as a visible creature, he also performs, in a rudimentary fashion, the central narrative advance that the movie itself is making--that of evolving rational man into imaginative man, refining the powers of the new imaginative creature, and bringing the old rational powers, via Lyle, completely into the new creative universe. The Duck begins, in fact, as an intellectual phenomenon--a voice--and hence as a rational

man. But given his already evolved visual powers, he embodies rational man at the threshold of the change into imaginative man. When he emerges into view through the visual skin-play with Melissa, and through his narrative exchange with the trooper--an exchange through which he "ducks" a speeding ticket by his ability to narrate the sexual potency in Melissa's image for the trooper--he is born as a thorough-going imaginative creature. His ongoing growth thereafter extends the powers of the new creature so that not simply the creature, but his method of creative advance can become visible.

Visually, Rubber Duck projects the qualities of an imaginative creature. When first visible through the truck's side window, he primarily appears as an image of skin. Wearing a tee shirt, his image (like Melissa's bare-shouldered image) exposes the body's surface that reflects light. Dark hair and beard frame his face, giving it structure and definition, and he wears dark glasses. Not yet, in this moment, fully empowered as an imaginative creature, his eye is not in the open. When the trooper pulls him over, Rubber Duck removes his glasses, freeing his eye as an active power in the movie. Furthermore, when he steps down from the truck, he reveals a long and lean physique--a body primed for action. His manner toward the trooper also reveals his new power. Rather than argue and increase the tension between them, Rubber Duck stays cool and allows his narrative abilities to get him out of trouble.

The Duck's birth as a visual narrator appears, too, through the work that he does. His voice emerges out of, and his image first appears within the black and silver truck that he drives. Composed of and moved through mechanical connections, the truck supremely images in sophisticated and mobile form the technological powers evolved through Cable's static structures--his shack and water-pumping system. Moreover,

the truck advances the creative power in technology that emerged in The Wild Bunch and in The Ballad with the novel and miraculous appearance of automobiles--a power most completely imaged in The Ballad through the alignment of the automobile with Hildy's image. Hildy, however, is a passenger within the automobile which is driven by a functionary, someone external to her moral transformation. In Convoy, Rubber Duck, the central human image, drives the truck, and his eye and imagination lead and give direction to the truck's mechanical and technological energies. Furthermore, driving a tanker filled with highly volatile explosives, the Duck begins his life involved in the moral feat of negotiating movement and transformation without "blowing it"--that is, without destructively exploding the fueling energies contained within the truck's image--before his growth as a central image, and the movie's creative advance, are complete.

Through participation in the birth of the movie, the birth of the truck's image, and the birth of the new visual power, Rubber Duck becomes centrally invovled in, and narrates, a story of birth. His power as an agent of birth inheres in the fact that he is born as an image on his actual birthday. Moreover, he is born as a proponent of relations--initially of those relations between his voice, the truck's image, and the moving camera eye. As his story unfolds in the opening episodes, he grows as a discrete individual through his successive encounters with other discrete individuals--with Melissa and Violet, with the other truckers (particularly Love Machine and Spider Mike), and with Dirty Lyle. The Duck's drive to grow, to be continually born anew, exerts, as does his truck, a drafting action that brings the others into the moral process. Ultimately, the drive of individuals to grow

through complementary interaction gives birth to the convoy and to convoying as a moral enterprise.[1]

Central to the Duck's story of birth and growth is his relation to the female. He is born as an image through his visual interaction with Melissa, and it is Violet who announces his birthday. In addition, his initial interest in the female--both in Melissa and in Violet--is sexual. Through Melissa's appearance, the Duck's "come on" gains sexual potency; furthermore, the story he tells the trooper about her focuses on her literal sex which he claims to have seen: "I looked down, and bingo, there it was." When he arrives at the truck-stop, he is looking to celebrate his birthday by making love to Violet. But while his early interest in the female image tends toward predominantly physical interest, the two women, who enact different value, present him with different possibilities for relating. The fact that within the narrative he first interacts with Melissa and that this is a visual flirtation, indicates that he is already making the transition from the primarily physical relation with Violet to the new relation with Melissa.

Melissa first appears reflected in her rear-view mirror, then in the Duck's side mirror as she pulls out to pass him. Having a mind to pass the truck, she ignores the Duck's image, which the camera sees for the first time as she drives by. Rather, she checks her rear-view mirror once she moves in front of him. Though Melissa moves easily and with grace, and though later shots reveal that she makes the most of her image--her white strapless dress pulled loosely upon her thighs exposes her skin to the eye--she does not directly interact with images. Given to mirror reflections, she clarifies the Duck's imaginative intelligence through her inclinations as an intellectual female.

In addition, Melissa has an art--photography--that, while visual, requires that she view events and images intellectually so that they are stripped of their temporality and spatialized. Melissa's visual genius aims at witnessing and documenting events and literally putting a stop to them. This gives her an advantage later in the movie when she is better able than the Duck or Love Machine to communicate with the news media, but in the initial exchange with the Duck, her art curbs his come-on. As she begins to photograph him from her moving car, he retreats into the truck's cab, made conventionally self-conscious by the camera's still gaze. Despite its limitations, however, Melissa's visual bent, together with her sleek mobility--evident in the XKE she drives, in her lean, stripped-down form, and in her economical moves--make her a better partner for Rubber Duck than does Violet.

As her name suggest, and as her softer, less-defined features reveal, Violet is a natural female.[2] While Melissa appears classic and cool--there is nothing superfluous in her, no wasted motion or emotion--Violet cannot contain her excitement at the Duck's arrival at the truck-stop, nor can she, as she watches the affair between Melissa and the Duck take shape, conceal her jealousy and unhappiness. Her image, and her powers as an image, are dominated by her physical and emotional reactions.

For Melissa, involvement with Rubber Duck constitutes an advance--specifically, an advance in her involvement with moving images. When she arrives at the restaurant, she begins to streamline her image--dispossessing herself of her car, which has broken down, and her "plumage," the brightly-colored items of clothing that she auctions off to Violet and Black Widow. Shedding property, Melissa makes herself lighter and more mobile, and better prepared for going with Rubber Duck. Violet, on

the other hand, already attired in the layered waitress uniform of dress, apron, and hat, is interested in acquiring more property; she puts on what Melissa casts off in order to make herself more attractive to the Duck. Moreover, her ties to a place--she works at the truck-stop and is married--severely limit her ability to move. Violet tends also to see the Duck as a property or a physical possession: he is her "birthday boy." At the same time, her warm maternal and sensual love for him--evidenced in her affection, her concern that he "take care," and in the gift of her body--provide the womb out of which his new relation with Melissa can be born.

In his growth as the movie's central image, Rubber Duck requires the organic sexuality that Violet provides. Their lovemaking makes visible or actualizes the sexual come-on only implicit in the Duck's flirtation with Melissa. And in becoming actual, the image of their lovemaking becomes an originating source for further action, spending itself not in the private climax of the lovers, but narratively exploding into the restaurant brawl whose action creates the conditions for the convoy's birth. When, as the convoy is beginning to form, Violet steps down from the truck and Melissa gets in, her organic qualities give way to Melissa's intellectual value. Moreover, the interruption of the explicit sexual act reveals that the birth in progress occurs through a power subtler than physical reproduction, a power that, in its next phase of growth, requires Rubber Duck's and Melissa's mutual alignment.

When the deputy's car speeds off after Melissa and recedes into the distance, the camera eye dissolves through a series of road shots. Each shot presents a new section of road from a slightly different angle. A subtle transformation in color and perspective is underway. Out of the stark blue and white of the desert, the camera is moving into a more

civilized area. Brown vegetation and fences appear.[3] A new truck emerges, and another; the Duck's moves out ahead of them. Already the conditions for convoying are visually present. The vehicles that move counter to each other in the opening sequence--Rubber Duck's and Melissa's on one hand, the trooper's on the other--here give way to three trucks that make a complete convoy. Moreover, they move in the cooperative spirit of convoying. The Duck's voice, heard through the transitional shots, gives a "smokey report" so that the new truckers will know the road is free from the law; and all three of them joke good-humoredly.

The impulse to "come on," which brought the Duck and Melissa together in the opening sequence, now extends into the relating of males. Rubber Duck, Love Machine, and Spider Mike form the seeds of the new bunch. What was a male unit in The Wild Bunch also begins as one in Convoy. But while the female image does not explicitly appear in this initial new bunch--she is only imagined within the male talk about "go-go girls" and such--this bunch evolves out of the Duck's relation with Melissa, and it will eventually become a movement embracing all individuals in their individuality without reference to gender, race, or age as abstract categories.

The Duck's relation within the male group further allows him to clarify his value as an individual and as a moving center, or, in CB language, a "front door." When Love Machine calls the Duck the "best front door in the business," he articulates the Duck's power as the man out front, the man at the threshold. As the convoy's leading eye, he negotiates the new territory before anyone else does. The drivers behind him move in the draft his moving creates. When the seed convoy forms, Rubber Duck becomes its front door, not by right or election or

coercion, but through the simple fact that he begins out front as the moving center or thrusting point of the trucks' convergent act. Unlike Pike, whose leadership depends in part on his claim to authority over the members of the Bunch--"I'll lead this Bunch or end it right now"--the Duck leads naturally and empirically.

Given the Duck's special powers as an individual and moral center, the easy interaction within the seed convoy in itself is insufficient to further evolve those powers. The imaginative life of the Duck, Love Machine, and Spider Mike in the seed convoy primarily aims at what one trucker later calls "fast cars, fast women, and fast food." Limited to essentially physical interests, the seed convoy cannot generate the transformation that gives birth to the convoy, nor is it prepared for the sudden appearance of Lyle whose command of language--specifically, of the CB language through which he tricks them into thinking he is a trucker--puts a stop to their physically-oriented talk as well as their physical movement.[4]

Lyle emerges first as a voice (as the Duck does) and then visually in a close-up head shot speaking into his CB microphone. The shot constitutes him as the "head" man among the various lawmen that appear in the movie. The Duck recognizes Lyle's status when he calls him "the Papa Bear." While Lyle shares a vocal birth with the Duck, Lyle's voice functions in a radically different way. First, it is associated visually not with a moving image, as is Rubber Duck's within the truck, but it appears as a static image whose primary action is verbal. Lyle's CB name, "Cottonmouth"--through which he tricks the three truckers into "bring[ing] it on up"--focuses the duplicity in his voice and his words. Although initially Lyle's message that "there ain't a bear in sight"

appeals to vision and to the Duck in his role as "front door," ultimately, as a lie and a trap, it stops them.

Lyle's duplicity, a quality which attaches to his birth as a verbal narrator, subverts his relation to images by countering the visual method that leads the Duck forward. His unmarked police car, which in the speed-trap episode disguises his connection with the law, contributes to the verbal subversion of vision that his handle and his insider's knowledge of trucker language perpetrate. Moreover, Lyle tends to let language and law mediate his relation to Rubber Duck. Rather than attack the Duck directly, he does so indirectly through the CB channel, through his jurisdictional power to issue citations, and through his continual harrassing of Spider Mike as a way of getting at the Duck. Fearing the moral unknown, Lyle avoids eye-to-eye or moral interaction in favor of the old, absolute morality whereby he intellectually knows and attempts to maintain a fixed relation to the Duck, a relation that aims at literally arresting the new morality active in the Duck and at stopping its growth. Furthermore, Lyle's character (in the Duck's later words) as "a broke down, old bribe-takin' piece of meanness" exposes the corruption of his old morality in light of the new.

In addition, Lyle introduces the Duck's past. Later, along with Melissa--who will also engage the Duck in talk about the past--Lyle will participate in the emergence of the Duck's "real" name, an event that evolves the Duck's familial and rational identity out of the physical handle, "Rubber Duck." In the speed-trap episode, however, the Duck simply allows that he and Lyle "go all the way back," that Lyle wrote his first ticket and "fully intends to be writing my last." As a figure out of the Duck's past, Lyle embodies an authority whose aim is to limit and

control the Duck's ability to grow, as well as to move. In conjunction with the other authority figures in the movie--Chief Love and Governor Haskins, especially--Lyle asserts a paternalistic authority (which Rubber Duck also allows when he calls Lyle the "Papa Bear" and, in the jailbreak episode, "old man") that furthers Violet's maternalistic characterization of the Duck as a "boy." The embryonic parent/child relation that emerges between Lyle and the Duck in the speed-trap episode prefigures the Governor's question to the Duck and the convoyers--"why don't you grow up?"--as well as the moral leap at the bridge and beyond wherein the Duck's image becomes "father" to the man, to Lyle, through a creative rather than an authoritative act.

Despite Lyle's legal and authoritative pose, and despite what his words say, particularly his remark at the speed-trap that he wants "no part of [the Duck's] damn union," a remark that immediately refers to the Teamsters Union but that narratively focuses the Duck's inherent power to unite, Lyle, like Melissa, is involved in an individual relation with the Duck. It is Rubber Duck, however, who sees and articulates what he and Lyle share--independence. Lyle's tendency to become a law unto himself, while corrupt in its focus on law and abstraction, nevertheless contains in its urge toward autonomy a seed of the new morality--as do his talent for getting on the inside of the truckers' life through CB language and his particular interest in Rubber Duck. What he lacks is a clear eye to lead him into the new morality and liberate his life as an image. That eye, in the beginning, is Rubber Duck, whose moral advance through the art of convoying will eventually bring Lyle out into the open, expose to the "old man" the old morality's corruption, and allow him to make the quantum jump and "come on" into the new creative universe.

Lyle's atavistic method at the speed-trap comes to a dead end. By itself, it has no mechanism for getting the action going again. The truckers stop until the Duck "gives" in and pays the bribe money and through his cool disposition extricates them from the trap. In the clash of moralitites, as will become more evident in the restaurant sequence, Lyle resists unity and growth; and as one of the authoritative voices of reason in the movie he can only entertain dual possibilities--either the Duck (or in the restaurant sequence, Spider Mike) submits to the rule of law, or rejects it and thereby brings the force of law down upon him. In either case, action and growth stop. Only through the Duck's drive to "come on," given visible form and force in the convoy, does the new morality's concrete method of transformation come completely into view.

That Rubber Duck's "come on" is directed, in the first phase of the movie, toward freeing the uniting or unitive powers to act creatively and generate the convoy--the physical embodiment of "convoying"--becomes dramatically evident in Lyle's continued resistance to any form of union during the restaurant sequence, and in the fight that disposes of his resistance. Moving from his denial of any common bond between himself and the Duck, Lyle steps up his attack on the Duck through provoking Spider Mike. Specifically, his provocation takes the form of arresting Mike and thus preventing him from joining his wife for the birth of their child, as well as the verbal viciousness of denying that Mike is the father of the unborn child--an act that negates altogether Mike's power to generatively unite with the female. Opposing the unitive and generative powers entailed in "coming on," Lyle's old morality again brings natural movement--Mike's physical progress home, and, indirectly, the Duck's physical union with Violet--to a halt.

Except for the dramatic tension engendered by Lyle's verbal commands to Mike, and the resulting stand-off between them, virtually nothing moves in the restaurant until Rubber Duck appears. Then action accelerates until the fight explodes. Through the fight, the urge of the body to unite--an urge squelched by Lyle's divisive tactics--comes violently to the fore. Bodies move together, make explosive contact, and break away. While it has dramatic origins in the argument--and cinematic origins in the shootouts of The Wild Bunch--the fight immediately demonstrates that no one will be hurt and that death is not its aim. It enacts a narrative event wherein the camera eye evolves action out of action: comic action out of an episode whose shootout predecessors emphasize tragic action, unitive action (the truckers join together in behalf of Mike) out of Lyle's divisive action, visual action (Rubber Duck and the truckers acquire their first spectators) out of the argument's verbal action, cinematic action (the montage and slow motion shots) out of the fight's physical action. And in imaginatively liberating the body's urge to unite from Lyle's dramatic vise, the fight prepares for the embodiment of unitive action in the birth of the convoy.

When the fight has run its course, a new possibility for action has opened up. Rubber Duck comes forward, walking to his truck; he does not look back, nor does he speak. The camera's interest, and that of the other truckers, turns to his movement. Someone asks where he is going, and he answers, "To the state line." Drawn into his action, Mike, Love Machine, and the others run to their trucks. The convoy is beginning. In these early moments of its birth, no one, not even Rubber Duck, plans for the convoy to happen. It occurs spontaneously. The Duck imagines "going," then the others imagine it; and in the coming together of freely-acting imaginations, the convoy--a new form of action, a new

morality, is born.[5] Rubber Duck emerges as its moving center, the image who focuses its urge to "come on" and unite, and who subsequently becomes its recognized leader through his talent as a "front door." Moving out of his imaginative drives, and in synch with the escalating narrative energies of the camera eye, the Duck, when he walks toward his truck, has, like Cable, "already left"; he has already evolved the new power of action that the convoy makes visible. Shedding the explosive method of the fight, the unitive powers of action become concretely imaged in the organically united, inherently disciplined convoy, which moves of its own self-generating action into the open road.

Evolving its unitive power--that power first apparent in the camera eye's move to unite with the black truck's image, carried through via the emergence of the Duck's central image, and explosively liberated through the fight--the camera eye gives birth to the convoy as a physical event. Once born, the convoy transforms all the possibilities for the images that converge within it--for Rubber Duck, Melissa, and each individual convoyer, who, through their shared action, initiate the new community of individuals in a coherent form; and for Lyle, who chases behind, drawn into the convoy's imaginative action. Moreover, through its ability to convoy, the camera eye performs a cinematic transformation that unites the moving images of the trucks and police cars as they plow through billowing sand along a desert side road. Through its "dissolve dance," the cinematic imagination disposes of the division that dramatically propels the chase, and it conjoins truckers and lawmen, trucks and patrol cars as images for their own sake. Furthermore, the music that emerges from the soundtrack--first, a waltz, then a classical version of the movie's title song--promotes the cinematic feat. Favoring

the artful music over the crude physical sounds of the vehicles--their jouncing and grinding as they heave through the sand--the soundtrack, in conjunction with the camera eye, transforms the slow-motion of the massive semis into dance. And through its classical form, the music aesthetically structures the visual action and displays the art in convoying.[6]

The dissolve dance, in completing the birth begun in the movie's opening images, discloses the movie's narrative drive to evolve the moral process through which the powers of art, cinematically attributed to the convoy in the dissolve dance, can emerge front and center. That process appears through the three phases of growth that the trucks' images undergo in the movie's opening sequences. First, the individual image of Rubber Duck's truck emerges and is increased through the vehicles of Melissa, the deputy, Bobby, and Mike; second, the identifiable and coherent image of the convoy forms; and third, the new-born convoy becomes cinematically transformed into an artistic event. The trinary process, in each of its phases, evolves a power of action that completes its growth when it gives birth to the new, more refined power of action; and each birth occurs as a discrete leap forward. Thus, in the first phase, the camera eye sees the trucks foremost as images coming into view; in the second phase, it narrates the convoy proper which gains a coherent structure and an inherent discipline; and in the third phase, it imagines them artfully convoying. Through its trinary process, the camera eye advances the movie's and Rubber Duck's moral drives, and enacts a method for breaking away from Lyle's dead-end morality into the convoy's moral adventure.

Making Connections

"The purpose of the convoy is to keep moving."

Convoying, the creative act of the camera eye that initiates and leads the movie--and out of which issues the convoy--matures its powers of action through evolving the trinary process that becomes visible in the movie's first phase. As a method of accomplishing growth, moreover, the trinary process informs the movie's entire narrative action. The convoy's moral advance procedes through three distinct phases. The sensory or physical phase--apparent in the emphasis on physical birth via Rubber Duck's birthday, the birth of Spider Mike's child, and the birth of the convoy, as well as in the "body" action of the lovemaking and fight scenes--matures the unitive powers of action that issue into convoying as an actual, visual event.

The intellectual or rational phase, wherein the convoy becomes aware of itself as a phenomenon, evolves its linear or vectoral powers of action through its interaction with the three forms that the voice of reason takes: Lyle and the law enforcers, the media, and the liberal governor. Intellectual growth becomes apparent in the acts of self-reflection and naming that occur as the convoy gains a sense of identity, in the emphasis on "causes" and on the "purpose" of the convoy, and in the Duck's emerging function as the leader and voice of the convoy. Visually, the convoy's linear progression through New Mexico--visualized through the numerous shots of the trucks traveling along the highway--evolves the vectoral powers through which they come to connect with the voices of reason, as does the CB connection aurally. In addition, the intellectual phase gives rise to a structural division in the movie. Mike,

the proponent of the dark, physical powers within the convoy, splits off from the convoy proper to get home in time for the birth of his son. Lyle follows him to lay another trap for the Duck, and with that move, the narrative alternates between the two events--the convoy's growing power as a social phenomenon and Spider Mike's entrapment by Lyle.

In the third phase, the moral and imaginative powers come to the fore in the Duck's move to free Spider Mike. Led by the eye's growth, the moral powers begin to break through during the intellectual phase in shots that emphasize light and the eye, and via the new sense of the convoy as a spiritual event articulated by Reverend Sloan.[7] But the imaginative powers do not gain priority until Rubber Duck breaks away from the governor and the convoy, and goes to liberate Spider Mike from the trap of law. As a deliberate moral action, the move to save Mike performs the first moral transformation of the third phase, that in which the powers of intellect are brought into moral action via a definite "cause." The second moral transformation of the third phase occurs when Rubber Duck sheds the convoy and then Melissa to encounter Lyle at his "front door," and undergoes the death of his ego as "Rubber Duck." A third transformation--through which Lyle and Melissa cleanse their vision and participate in the creation of Rubber Duck's new image--completes the evolution of the moral powers, exposes the moral value in the Duck's visual art of life, and brings all images, including Lyle, into the new creation.

The three-phase process through which convoying advances appears graphically in the song subtitles that emerge near the beginning of each new phase, together with the simultaneous emergence of the song's lyrics on the soundtrack. The song itself, portions of which are sung

when the three titles appear as well as in the closing credit sequence, links the visual narrative with a verbal narrative. The song acts as a voice-over narrator in the brief moments when it breaks through, and with the titles, intellectually identifies the phases of action. The visual titles--"Arizona (noon)," "New Mexico (I-40)," and "Texas (dawn)"--structure the narrative and through their emphasis on place and time they promote the convoy's linear or vectoral progression. However, in visually conjoining space and time the titles verbally image the convoy's advance as an event in space-time. Their words, as images, do not separate space from time as the analytical power in the words does. Thus, while evolving structure as a feature within the narrative process, the verbal titles "go with," rather than control, the movie's moral advance. In fact, the titles and song lyrics do not enact the transformations from one phase to another; they arise in the aftermath of those transformations, drafted into action by the moving images. And in their relation to the changes in phase, they show that imaginative, not rational power leads the convoy and the movie forward.

In the second phase of its advance, the camera eye moves to develop the convoy's intellectual powers structurally focused through the subtitles. In their emphasis on the states, the titles promote the jurisdiction of law which becomes a dominant feature in the intellectual phase. When the convoy crosses the state line, it leaves Lyle's jurisdiction and enters the jurisdiction of Chief Stacy Love as well as federal jurisdiction. The title that marks this phase--"New Mexico (I-40)"--also suggests what will become "new" in it, as does the shift in value from a jurisdiction headed by "Dirty Lyle" to that of a man whose name is "Love." Furthermore, at the same time it emphasizes the convoy's vectoral motion

along the highway, "I-40" centers the convoy's intellectual phase in the growth of the powers of the "I." Moving through New Mexico, Rubber Duck will evolve his personal name--Martin Penwald--and his public identity as the leader of the convoy, and the convoy will, concomitantly, grow into consciousness of itself as a public event.

Phase two begins with a sequence in which Lyle attempts to catch up to Rubber Duck just prior to the convoy's entry into New Mexico, and it initiates the efforts of the law enforcers--Lyle, the federal agents in the helicopter, Chief Love, and all the deputies and troopers that later gather at the roadblock--to stop the convoy. Relegated to the "back door" of the convoy by his literally reactionary morality, Lyle has difficulty reaching Rubber Duck, the convoy's moving center. When he tries to drive between Mike's and Love Machine's trucks, they "close the door" on him, demolishing his patrol car. Furthermore, the car becomes momentarily attached to the side of Love Machine's truck, making of the truck, ironically, a "bear trap" for the "bear" who wants to trap truckers.

Lyle's exploits in the bear trap episode further reveal the corruption and failure of his old morality, which, moving at the backside of the convoying event, has no method for negotiating the moving center. The best it can do is to structurally connect itself to the convoy whose more vigorous generative energies soon leave Lyle and his method stalled and demoralized in the dead-center of the highway. As the convoy speeds away into New Mexico, Lyle resorts to a verbal connection, via the police radio, with Chief Love, and thereby further discloses point-to-point connecting, rather than moral relating through the center, as the law's limited power of action. Lyle makes the connection in order to increase the forces of law operating against the convoy--forces that will

appear in Chief Love's roadblock. But despite the display of forces of law that escalates through the intellectual phase, in fact, the old morality--as is evident in Lyle's disabled car and in the partner who wets his pants--has already begun an entropic decline. Its energies can only act to erect increasingly more massive barriers to the convoy's movement, barriers that ultimately fail and that, in themselves, cannot sustain, much less generate action. Moreover, Lyle himself falls further and further behind in his efforts to get at Rubber Duck. In their next encounter--during the roadblock sequence--Lyle becomes the "bear in the air," a voice from above distanced from the convoy by virtue of his acquiesence in the law's abstraction. And when the roadblock fails and Spider Mike splits for Texas, Lyle separates himself from the convoy altogether in order to lay his most vicious and duplicitous trap of all.

Lyle's effort to connect with Rubber Duck in the bear trap episode gives way to a new phase of the convoy's growth. Passing through the state line, Widow Woman sings, "New Mexico, I love you," and the convoyers blast their air horns and wave to passers-by. Their jubilant spirit and their urge to love show that the convoy moves through a better power than that entailed in Lyle's divisive hatred of truckers and of Rubber Duck in particular.[8] Moreover, their loving spirit immediately issues into new growth: three trucks, together with Reverend Sloan's busload of "long-haired friends of Jesus," join the convoy, followed--throughout the sequence leading up to Chief Love's roadblock--by innumerable other trucks. The trucks' images, joining together to create a new event--the full-blown convoy--morally relate with the human centers within the trucks who, concomitantly with the convoy's growth, are evolving and articulating a new sense of what is happening.

Widow Woman, who is the first to comment on the changes in the convoy--"Do you know how big this thing is? Just look out there. Just look"--calls attention to it as a visual event. Melissa responds analytically:

> Melissa: That's incredible. Where are they all coming from?
>
> Duck: Everywhere.
>
> Melissa: I can't believe it. Why?
>
> Duck: Don't ask me. Ask them. I'm just running for my life myself.
>
> Melissa: But they're all following you.
>
> Duck: No they ain't. I'm just out front.

Like the reporter who appears later, Melissa wants to know why. She wants to rationally understand what the convoy is, and she makes the logical assumption that Rubber Duck will satisfy her rational curiosity. Moreover, she assumes that a rational method is driving the convoy--that the convoy "follows" as an effect of the Duck as a first cause.

Melissa's questions allow Rubber Duck the occasion to express his understanding of the convoy, but not in the logical terms Melissa raises. Rubber Duck affirms that the convoy moves through individuals, not according to causes. Moreover, the Duck focuses not on what he is running from, but what he is running for; and in looking out ahead rather than behind, his answer confirms the value of what his eye sees--that he is the convoy's "front door" not out of any superimposed authority but out of his ability to run for "life."

The Duck's exchange with Melissa begins to verbally clarify the purpose of the convoy, and thus advances its coalescence as a self-directed, autonomous unity. In addition, it brings forward Melissa as

central to the Duck's advance through the intellectual phase. As the convoy continues to encounter the voice of reason in its various forms, Rubber Duck turns to Melissa to help him articulate his public function as the leader of the convoy. Moreover, Melissa's emergence as an analytical voice--as a voice of reason within the convoy--prepares for her connecting with Lyle in the birth of Rubber Duck's real name.

The convoy's growth, inside and out, elicits reactive growth from the forces of law. While trucks join in the procession and the central human images evolve the convoy's self-awareness, Lyle, Chief Love, and the federal agents ready the roadblock--the law's first direct assault on the convoy's movement. Far from stopping the convoy, however, the roadblock simply enables it to increase its powers of action. First, it gives rise to the Duck as an ego via introducing his given name. From the police helicopter that circles the convoy, abstracted from it by distance, the federal agent attempts to break into the CB channel:

> Federal Agent: Attention, driver Martin Penwald.
>
> Lyle [in close-up]: Martin?!
>
> Melissa [in close-up]: Penwald?!

Lyle and Melissa react to the name as they do because, in traditional terms, it is so out of character--as the Duck's mildly embarrassed laugh indicates. Appearing in a moment when Rubber Duck and the convoy are evolving the powers of self, the name--Martin "Pen-walled"--phonetically carries the limitations of ego and social identity that "given" names (names imposed from the outside) enact. The humor arising from the name's appearance additionally suggests that the name and the self it identifies will, in the advance of convoying, ultimately not be taken seriously. In the intellectual phase, they have value, but once the

Duck and the convoy have completely evolved their intellectual powers, those powers--including the ego--will be sloughed off in the creation of the new moral powers. Moreover, the camera eye's linking of Melissa's, Lyle's, and the Duck's images in the comic birth of the name reveals their interaction as a central agency of the camera eye's trinary method.

In the same way that the Duck's given name cannot "pen" up the energies of his image, the roadblock cannot "wall" in the convoy. The barrier is no match for the explosive, forward-thrusting energies of the silver tanker, nor for the moral and imaginative energies centering through Rubber Duck's leading eye. As the convoy smashes through, the law literally gives way--and in doing so it promotes the value in Rubber Duck and gets drafted into convoying.[9] Lyle's jurisdiction falls completely away, and the convoy, escorted by the police cars that sought to stop it, enters the Chief's jurisdiction, the town of "Love." There they discover for the first time that they are not simply a movement of truckers, but a public phenomenon. People line the streets cheering and waving, bands play, children on bikes and skateboards roll alongside the trucks. In addition to evolving their intellectual powers, the convoyers simultaneously increase their power as images within the public eye. The detached, bemused spectators of the truck-stop fight sequence become, in Chief Love's town, the loving community who joins the convoy in mutual imaginative activity. Moreover, the townspeople, who, in their celebration of the convoy become visible, have no need of the reporter whose voice emerges from the soundtrack in this sequence. They require no voice to mediate for them their involvement with the convoy, which is visual and immediate.

In fact, the reporter--who turns out to be the press aide to Governor Haskins--mediates not for the community but for the highest authority among the voices of reason that emerge within the intellectual phase. He also mediates in that he appears as the second voice of reason, "mediate" between the law enforcers and the Governor. Unlike the law enforcers, who, like Lyle, tail the convoy or erect barriers to stop it, the reporter travels in the back of a pick-up truck with his video crew.[10] In attempting to move with the convoy--his truck drives alongside the semis so he can interview the drivers--the reporter demonstrates that the only way to "know" the convoy is to get in on its action. His intellectual bias, however, prevents him from making more than an external connection with the convoy through physical proximity and through the verbal interview of the observer. His aim to get at the causes of the convoy recalls Melissa's earlier questions. He wants to find out "who they are, what they are, and where they're going." He asks Rubber Duck if "this convoy [is] some sort of protest demonstration, and if it is, what's its purpose." Like Melissa, he wants to know why, and as a voice of reason he is most puzzled by the convoy's movement--"It seems they're not interested in stopping"--which he can only interpret in terms of his rational bias as a protest against something. Causes, the sort of political causes he has in mind, do not arise as a function within the convoy until he explicitly asks for them. And even when they do arise, they do not account for the central "purpose" of the convoy, which, in the Duck's words, "is to keep moving."

The Duck's sense of purpose centers the convoy in the imaginative act of convoying, rather than in its social identity as a political movement. At the same time, he is evolving out of his personal self--

expressed in the name, "Martin "Penwald"--his role as leader and as representative of the social and political "causes" articulated by the individual convoyers. Melissa reminds him that "they're talking about their future, not just yours," and advises him to talk with the Governor. Despite the fact that she moves within the convoy, as a voice of reason Melissa responds to the abstract sense of the convoyer's "future." Still not aware of what she is seeing or what she is involved in--although she insists later during the episode with the Governor that she is "involved"--Melissa aids the "humanitarian" tendency to generalize that the reporter and Governor promote. At the same time, she evolves her function as a guide to Rubber Duck through the intellectual phase, a function necessary to his advance since unless he meets head-to-head with the Governor--who as a "liberal" superficially presents the rational method in a more reasonable and attractive form than Lyle does--he will not be able to expose the Governor's bogus "liberality," his corrupt favoring of abstraction over individuals.

As the convoy moves toward the meeting with the Governor, acts of division escalate. The camera eye cuts from day to night, and Spider Mike detaches from the convoy and heads home for the birth of his child. Another cut reveals the Governor, the reporter, and his aides in a dark room. The reporter, in sinister tones, remarks that as a "liberal humanitarian," the Governor "couldn't ask for a better opportunity to make the headlines." Although the convoyers do not see it yet, narratively, the Governor's corruption has broken into view, and with its emergence comes word that Lyle has split for Texas after Mike. The duplicity inherent within the voice of reason issues into the narrative's

structural division between the convoy's move into the political arena and the law's assault on Spider Mike.

With the exposure of the Governor's corruption, the voice of reason has no more force narratively. It remains only as a factor within the convoy's advance, as a pushing off point for the next transformation--the birth of the moral phase out of the intellectual phase. And already, within the escalating acts of division, the moral powers are breaking through. When Spider Mike begins to break away from the main unit of the convoy, the camera eye moves within his truck; it sees the lights of the town and the highway, and comes to center in a pattern of colored lights. Moving in relation to one another, the red and green coronas project the power of light to enact visual transformation.[11] When Rubber Duck comes to meet the Governor, the visual powers of the camera eye and within the convoy are ready to come into the open as the agency of convoying. There is still work to do within the intellectual phase--the Duck must expose the Governor to the convoy, and a new relation between the Duck, Melissa, and Lyle must appear--but as a power of action within the convoy, the voice of reason has completed its evolution and is ready to give birth to the moral "cause" of saving Spider Mike.

That the powers of intellect are incapable of moving the adventure forward becomes evident in the meeting episode when, for the first time since its birth, the convoy is immobilized. Already diminished by Spider Mike's leaving, the convoy's powers of physical action come to a standstill in the holding compound. What moves is verbal action as the Duck and Melissa discuss the impending meeting, she maintaining that

she is "involved," he questioning "what it is you think you're involved in, cause I'm beginning to think I don't have any idea." Seeing the inadequacy of "ideas" to explain the convoying event, the Duck gives Melissa an opportunity to define her involvement--but she has no answer. Her analytical faculty is powerless to define her relation within the convoy or the convoy itself. Moreover, the question itself, as a method for coming to "know" convoying, falls away as the Duck and Melissa become visually interested in each other and move inside his truck in what appears to be a preparation for lovemaking. Melissa lies down and the Duck sits beside her. They do not undress, nor do they touch. They look into one another's eyes and they smile, visually and imaginatively consummating the "come on" of the movie's beginning. Rather than explain "involvement," they perform it with each other, and through their imaginative union increase the powers of convoying.

Intercut with the lovemaking event--and with the meeting scene that interrupts it--Lyle's arrival in Alvarez brings him closer to moral alignment with the Duck and Melissa, and the convoy. There at the jailhouse he sees Mike's bloodied and swollen face. Visibly sickened by the sight--he has difficulty looking at it--Lyle offers to find out what he can about the birth of Mike's child. Lyle's sympathetic response, his first in the movie, derives both from the violence done to Mike and from the fact that he himself, in wanting Mike as bait for Rubber Duck, has caused it. More important, seeing Mike brings Lyle eye-to-eye with the inherent corruption of his own method; it exposes to him the old morality's ultimate aim--to violate and degrade images. Insofar as it jolts him into looking at the image, Lyle's encounter with

Mike enacts the first step in cleansing his vision; and it involves him, along with the Duck and Melissa, in giving birth to the new powers of action--the moral imaginative powers--that drive convoying.

When the Duck leaves Melissa to meet the Governor, the new powers, already active, are on the verge of initiating the new phase of the convoy's advance. The old intellectual powers become concentrated in the Governor, who, arriving by helicopter (as Lyle did earlier), descends as a god from on high. As an authority seeking to transcend the world of change and images, as the head of state and the chief voice of reason, the Governor attempts to literally govern the unruly energies of the convoy through making a rational connection with Rubber Duck. He proposes a logical exchange whereby he will help the convoyers if Rubber Duck will become a spokesman for his enervated campaign. Lacking the morally centered, self-generative powers of the convoy--he acts only via external political connections--the Governor aims to co-opt its movement, and in the process, devalue the Duck's image in favor of causes and ideologies. He aims to turn the Duck into a "voice."

Despite the Governor's show of power, that power has little effect. The Duck makes no decision. Action occurs outside the meeting tent. A series of trucks, their headlights moving through the darkness, pass the message from Alvarez: Lyle has Spider Mike. Traveling with the light, the truck-voices negotiate the center and reach the Duck. News of Mike exposes to the convoyers not only the corruption of law, but the Governor's failure as a power of action. He cannot, he says, simply remove a man from jail. He advises the convoyers that "sometimes you have to forget the individual." Rubber Duck asks, "Is that it?" "It," he sees, is the intellect's complete inertia when faced with the power in images.

The Duck walks to his truck. The camera eye follows his legs, visually reinvolving the physical powers in the new moral action. Melissa, still caught up in intellectual action, calls after him, "Why does it always have be you?" A voice from the crowd asks, "Hey," Duck, you comin' back?" In a long shot that favors the image of the gleaming tanker toward which the Duck moves, the Duck turns and looks toward the crowd. Already, the structural powers of the intellectual phase are centering in the truck's image. Rubber Duck does not answer. As a medium of advance, words have lost priority. He turns, gets in, and prepares to drive away. The camera eye cuts to the crowd as it disperses. Melissa, at its center, looks after the Duck, then turns. Her image, turning into the center, enacts the transformation into moral phase.

In the next shot, the tanker's image moves horizontally in the red-lit crease of the horizon. Its moving image conjoins with the vectoral powers that gained power in intellectual phase. As this shot dissolves, the horizon line splits the screen and the emerging close-up image of Rubber Duck so that the sky's light illuminates his eyes. In the transition from intellectual to moral phase, the analytical division cut by the horizon line intersects and passes into the emerging power--Rubber Duck's eye aimed at the prospect of liberating Mike's image. Subsequent shots dissolve into view the close-up images of Melissa, Love Machine, Widow Woman, and the other, unnamed truckers, all moving in their trucks. Without reason, without rationally knowing--the Duck never tells them what he is doing--without the CB connection, these images go with the action. Their emergence discloses that the moral phase is imagined, that it occurs through the discrete, autonomous, self-

generative, creative acts of individuals, and that what moves within their images, and what moves their images, is the blessed moral eye.

Convoying

Duck: Forget it.

Lyle: I ain't forgettin' nothin' cause this ain't over yet.

Duck: It is for me.

When the new moral act breaks completely into view, no rational plan or design controls its birth. Moral phase evolves through the implicit method of the trinary process, as it is imagined by the cinematic eye. And with the new phase, convoying, the natural activity through which the individuals within the convoy relate center-to-center, emerges as the central moral power of the movie's creative advance. With the cut to dawn in Texas, the camera eye comes to center in the image of a curving, rain-slick road. In the right periphery of the screen, something moves--the small black shape of a truck. Another cut brings the truck clearly into view. It takes the curve, comes straight forward, and then, crossing right as it pulls off the road, moves in relation to the now-moving camera eye until its image arrives in the center of the camera's field of vision. Converging the three powers active in the movie's opening images--the curving road, the driving truck, and the moving camera eye--the dawn of moral phase illumines the power of images to "go together," center-to-center, with the camera eye, as the source of Peckinpah's moral art.

Moving out front and in the open, convoying excites new imaginative activity. Centering through Rubber Duck's image, the camera eye zooms in to a close-up of his eye; then through successive cuts it moves

into the town of Alvarez, into the jail, and comes to center in Spider Mike's image, the center of Rubber Duck's morally active imagination. A subsequent shot sees the Duck's truck and a line of trucks moving in the distance behind him. As they come into view, each truck aligns itself on either side of the Duck's so that there is no longer a single, vectoral line of trucks with one in the lead, but now a united front of trucks spread across the screen with Rubber Duck at the center, and with each truck a cell of autonomous power. The new convoyers look from one to the other. The camera cuts to Melissa, who rides with Love Machine. She announces that she "will get in the back," and moves into the cab's rear compartment. Her reflective powers, now only a passenger within the moral act, take a backseat to the leading imaginative powers. Without speaking, the convoyers rev their engines and trumpet their air horns. Acting spontaneously together, they move out, driving to dispose of the last vestiges of the intellect's hold on organic life.

When the trucks move toward the jail, it is their images, not the human agents within them (who are never visible through the windshields during the attack) that go after Alvarez' sheriff. Morally empowered through the creative act of convoying, the trucks, in their massive and mobile mechanical energies, literally image structure centered and transformed. The sheriff, a proponent of law, seeks refuge behind and inside buildings, using their structures to shield his car from the trucks' onslaught. But he cannot escape. Wherever he goes, the trucks' powerful images drive into view, penetrating and cinematically exploding in graceful slow motion the fragile edifices.

Issuing out of the death of the sheriff's car--the car stalls, covered by a fallen tin roof as the double-rig crushes the shed-remnants

surrounding it--two trucks, the Duck's and Love Machine's, drive directly for the jail. They curve slightly away from one another, then arc toward the jail's front wall. Lyle, unable to call for help--the telephone receiver, his last connection with the legal structure outside Alvarez, hangs dead and useless on its cord--shields his eyes as the trucks crash through. Wanting not to see, as earlier he did not want to see Mike's battered image, Lyle nevertheless opens his shielded eye to the trucks' onrushing images. In doing so, he performs the second step toward cleansing his eye and evolving clear vision. And this time he sees not the degradation of images by the law's abstract order, but images, structurally fortified via the trinary process and morally transformed into centers of action, demolishing the decreative structure of law, the jailhouse that in physically confining Spider Mike, continues to restrict the moral process from completing itself. He sees images shatter the shell of the old morality and release the life inside.

When the jailbreak is accomplished, the seed convoy--the Duck, Love Machine, and Spider Mike--emerge intact. Their active union effects the continuity and coherence of the movie's moral process and allows for continuing transformation. Spider Mike's freely moving image centers the physical powers of action within the moral phase of convoying. With that feat performed, Spider Mike recedes into the periphery, and the narrative moves to center the intellectual powers now working entirely through Lyle's argument with Rubber Duck. Lyle wants not to "forget it," the argument, as he wants not to see. A "representative of the law," he is bound to repeating the past, which for him entails perpetually attempting to "ticket" Rubber Duck and arrest his imaginative powers through verbal "citation." For the Duck, Lyle's argument in the jail has no moral force beyond its value for exposing Lyle to

himself as "a broke down old bribe-takin' piece of meanness," and as an "old man," a man who represents what is old and worn out. When Rubber Duck refuses to perpetuate the argument with Lyle, he rejects argument and division as modes of action. For him, "it," the atavistic morality of the "old," is over.

When the Duck and Love Machine back their trucks out of the jail, its roof caves in. The power in images is now all that shores up the old structure of law, and that power is fast moving to shed what remains of the old order. The convoy moves toward the Mexican border. Aerial and long-shots reveal more and more trucks in the convoy. It is entering a new period of growth wherein the imaginative energy of the moral phase is giving birth to images purely out of its creative genius. Frontal shots emphasize the convoy's tremendous driving power. Through the CB channel burst discrete voices imagining the Mexican adventure. The trucks gracefully interweave. The powers of art cinematically attributed to them in the dissolve dance are now naturally active in their images. Centering in the yellow bus, whose celebrants sing and wave their hands above them, the camera eye makes manifest the convoy's excited spiritual energies. What is happening now moves beyond argument, beyond law. The convoy is coming into alignment with the imaginative powers of the moving camera eye, which, through the narrative act of convoying, is preparing the convoy for the imminent creative phase that will give birth to the universe of images.[12]

From the yellow bus, the camera eye cuts to a bridge, then to another yellow bus, this one carrying school children. In moving from new spiritual life active in the Reverend's yellow bus, to the structured bridge, to the childrens' new physical life, the camera eye makes visible the agency of its trinary process within the coming event. The

school bus passes in front of the Duck's tanker as it moves forward, then comes to a stop and discharges the children. As they cross the street, Love Machine's truck bears down upon them. In the last possible moment, he sees the children and brakes--but not before hitting an ice cream truck that suddenly pulls in front of him. The accident brings the main body of the convoy to a halt, while Rubber Duck and Melissa keep going. The camera eye's creative powers, apparent in the transformation from spiritual bus to school bus, are concentrating in Rubber Duck, who now, moving with Melissa, becomes the moving center that carries forward the moral act of convoying. Moreover, in centering the creative powers of the cinematic eye, Rubber Duck begins to undergo the same process intitated through the bus/bridge/bus succession of images--a succession that, in moving from the spiritual and imaginative powers, to the intellectual and structural powers, to the physical and unitive powers, reverses the evolution of action through which the convoy has grown. The succession of powers to their origin, as it proceeds, turns the Duck "inside out" and exposes the center or source of his moral power in his moving color image.

When the Duck begins to emerge as the moving center who concentrates within his image all the powers of convoying, it becomes clear that he is not moving to cross the Mexican border, but moving at the border of the known and at the threshold of creation--at the imaginative "front door" wherein all the powers of the cinematic imagination's trinary process are active and visible. The images of law which, issuing out of the bridge's structure, suddenly proliferate--a new view of the road flanked by road signs, uniformed men, a helicopter, guns, Lyle--do not control what is happening. When the Duck sees the bridge up ahead, he does not reinstate the divisive force of Lyle's argument, but imaginatively

centers the structural powers in the bridge and legal hierarchy, and prepares for the destruction of the final hold of the old order on convoying--manifested in Rubber Duck's ego and his role as a leader of the convoy. Moreover, in moving to destroy the self, Rubber Duck aligns his image with the evolutionary powers working in the camera eye. Rubber Duck undergoes a successive sloughing off of his old skin that reverses the process of his growth and strips him down to the centering power in his moving image. First, he sheds the convoy that is the moral outcome of his talent as a "front door," then Melissa, whose reflective and analytical powers guided him through the intellectual phase. And then he drives for the bridge where he will dispose of his self--first given form in his voice and name in the movie's opening shots--and his truck--whose image enacted his sensory birth.

When he jettisons Melissa, the Duck tells her, "This is as far as it goes." This time "it" includes more than the intellectual phase or Lyle's argument; "it" has become the entire past of the convoy that has brought him into this moment. From here on, the Duck's image contains all the powers of convoying--he has become the solitary moving center who advances the moral process in complete alignment with the active camera eye, which, as he revs the truck's engine and blacks out his eye with his glasses, takes over from him the power to visually narrate the central transformation. The cinematic eye, the agent of visual narration, not "Rubber Duck," leads the action forward through its trinary method of advance. "Rubber Duck," the intellectual persona of the human image within the truck, is--as Lyle's voice crackling over the CB announces--already "finished."

As the truck takes the curve, turning into the bridge, the camera eye gears into action. It accelerates its powers to converge, rapidly

cutting between the three central actions: the truck's driving toward Lyle, Melissa's running to see the event at the bridge, and the main convoy's activity at the accident site. There, while the witnesses of the accident become active participants in cleaning it up--in "getting it together"--Bobby calls to the "Duck" over the CB. But since "Duck" has self-destructed, no one answers. Melissa runs, her wide eyes already welling with tears, her movements protracted in slow motion. In the center of the action, the truck and the human image within it bear down on the barricaded bridge heading directly for Lyle, whose eye, like Melissa's, is wide open to the oncoming image.

As the truck enters the bridge, Lyle opens fire. The human image inside the truck pliantly slides into the floor of the cab out of Lyle's view. Lyle continues to shoot. The camera eye directs his aim toward the truck's hood ornament--a silver duck that images all that is left of the "Duck's" self. In shooting at the shell of the human image--at a representation of its persona and at the truck body that encases it--Lyle assists the camera eye's evolution beyond the "Duck." In the moment the tanker explodes, the camera eye, through a match cut, joins Lyle's and Melissa's teary-eyed close-up images center-to-center. The shot sequence brings forward the earlier match cut that cinematically linked Lyle and Melissa at the birth of "Martin Penwald." Now, through their new union, which morally aligns them in their grief at "Rubber Duck's" passing, their images enable the camera eye to complete its killing off of "Rubber Duck/Martin Penwald," the last potent form the atavistic morality takes in the movie. The convoyers, too, join in this union. The camera cuts to Love Machine, who, together with the other truckers, spontaneously blasts his air horn in homage to the passing of "Rubber Duck." The Duck's "passing," his creative "death," liberates

the imaginative powers of moral phase within the convoyers. For in losing "Rubber Duck" as a moving center, Melissa, Love Machine, Lyle, and all the rest are themselves free to become autonomous centers of moral and creative action.

That the power in the human image last seen in the truck does not literally pass away, but passes into the moving camera eye, becomes clear in the fact that the movie continues after the "death" of that image. Actually, the explosion does not "kill" the image, which appears in the moment following the explosion reaching its hand up to the steering wheel and turning the truck cab off the bridge and into the water below. Shedding his function as a persona, "Rubber Duck" becomes pure action--ducking the gunshots, slipping plastically into the truck's floor, and diving into the water, the element of ducks. Once, however, he goes into the center to die as an ego, the Duck subsequently spends his image in the transformation and appears no more. The agile camera eye, actively promoting and carrying through the transformation until the new human centers emerge, goes with the "ducking" action--it cuts into the truck cab, seeing from the inside as the windshield shatters under the weight of the water. Subsequent cuts reveal Lyle and Melissa, who, seeing through watery eyes, cleanse their vision in preparation for the imaginative acts their eyes will soon perform. In bringing their images, together with Love Machine's, forward at the death of "Rubber Duck," the camera eye assures that its trinary method of advance, and its power to pass the action on, is still alive. Of the three new human centers, the camera eye comes to center in Melissa, whose female image led the Duck into action and gave new force to his "come on." Her image now turns into the center of the screen and leads the adventure into its creative phase.

Opening Out

"The Duck's voice will be heard."

"Quack. Quack."

Completing the turn into the center via Melissa's image--which accomplishes the turn across the cut-on-action from her close-up to the shot of her in the fairground scene--the camera eye opens into the new visual universe. Melissa's image wholly enacts the turn. Whereas in the move from the intellectual to the moral phase she begins the turn (turning away from Rubber Duck) and the truck's moving image completes it, this time she carries over across the cut into the new creative phase and is born, as are all the images with her, into the visible creation. Moreover, as the most visually active of the three new human centers, Melissa is preparing to carry forward the camera eye's creative process. The New Rubber Duck can soon, through her visual act, appear.

As Melissa moves out of her turn, the new universe looks no different from the old one. The Governor's voice, emanating from the soundtrack, indicates they are again in New Mexico. His words, a eulogy for the dead "Duck," indicate a funeral--a ritual celebration of death. Truckers wear black armbands and a crowd watches the spectacle. The Governor's words however, do not account for what is happening. Issuing out of Melissa's turn, three actions--centering in the images of Melissa, Love Machine, and Lyle--begin to concomitantly and successively unfold. Dressed in white, Melissa walks past the yellow bus. From it, Reverend Sloan emerges and escorts her inside. Their immediate conjunction in the beginning of the creative phase promotes the spiritual

value alive in the convoy as the new leading power. Lyle and Love Machine sit near one another in the crowded grandstands. The Governor's voice speaks of Rubber Duck's "lonely dream." Aurally, the voice of reason still dominates, but the many spectators to the event show that the voice is in error--the Duck is certainly not "alone" in his dream--and a shot of the Governor reading his speech from cards reveals that the voice of reason now requires visual cues. Moreover, in presiding over the death of a name, "Rubber Duck," the voice of reason, which lives through naming, performs its own funeral. It has nothing to do with the life that is stirring within the fairground's images.

From Melissa's move into the bus, the action passes to Love Machine, who, for no express reason, gets up from his seat and tosses his chair away from him. Lyle watches with interest. The action disturbs the official proceeding. The Governor interrupts his speech; his aides frantically rush about. Truckers begin walking to their trucks, getting in, starting engines. Lyle stands. Everyone is looking around and moving out. Convoying is gearing up, and with its visual and moral quickening--evident in the new unitive activity of the truckers and in the moral disintegration of the voice of reason--prepares for an imminent birth.

Melissa appears within the skeletal framework of the open bus. In it, structure now gives way to the light that streams in and illuminates her white outfit. Still crying, Melissa brings forward into the new phase the eye's power to cleanse itself and see anew. Centered within the bus's spiritual light, her eye has become aligned with the power in light to give birth to images. She looks down, closing her eyes to the camera's view; when she opens them again, her new vision creates a new sight. A male image wearing a hat, dark glasses, and a bandana angled

across one eye, sits on the floor of the bus. His beard is light-colored.[13] Melissa breaks into a smile and speaks--"Martin Penwald!" New to the miracles her eye can perform in the imaginative universe, she responds to the image via the atavistic name. But this is no "Martin Penwald," nor is it "Rubber Duck." This is the New Rubber Duck, who, removing his hat and glasses, reinvolves his image and his eye in the movie's life--an image fully empowered as, and active within, the spiritual and imaginative center of convoying.

Born concomitantly with Melissa's imaginative eye, the New Rubber Duck, in becoming visible, completes the first creative transformation of the new phase. Moreover, as the outcome of events at the bridge, his emergence reveals their coherence and their continuity with Melissa's turn into the imaginative center. Having shed his old skin through reversing the process that gave him birth, and having entered the creative center--the imaginative "front door" wherein the known gives way to action-in-the-making--Rubber Duck performs the act of light. He spends himself so that the visible creation can come into view. And in giving over his image to the creative process, Rubber Duck, unlike Pike and Cable, dies to be born again, intact and transformed--no longer the leader of the convoy's vectoral motion, but alive within the bus, its literal spiritual center. Appearing through Melissa's imaginative act, he exposes the power in imagining to perpetually create the world, and he affirms the value in all the images that converge in his creating--Pike and the Bunch, Cable, Josh, and Hildy, Love Machine, Melissa, and Lyle, convoyers all.

And the convoy is on the move and "on its own," impelled out of its self-generative powers of action, and over the bus's loudspeaker the

duck-voice is being heard, and Lyle is turning to see. The last bastion of the old morality, Lyle is moving with the convoyers. His eye is active and he appears calm, not frantic like the Governor and press men who image reason out of control. Lyle is turning to see, and in the moment his eye unites with the new creature, with the New Duck, the old morality completely gives way to the lighter spirit of convoying. He becomes the New Duck's "good buddy," an individual united with the "good" and moral enterprise of convoying. Lyle laughs, and his laugh drowns out the rational voices and grows until it merges with the swelling music of the movie's themesong. Morally and cinematically conjoined, Lyle, Melissa, and the New Rubber Duck center once again the camera eye's creative method as that method initiates the movie's final transformation. The convoy, now rolling out into the open road, into the literally New Mexico, drafts into its imaginative action the entire community of individuals that fills the fairgrounds. Bringing forward the spectators of the fight sequence, the loving community that celebrated the convoy's appearance in their town, and the morally active community at the accident site, this new community, fully involved as spectators and as images, move spontaneously and in moral alignment with the convoy. And they image the moviegoer, who, in visually "going with" the movie, in "coming on" to its creative spectacle, joins in convoying.

Having given birth to the visible creation, to the universe of images and its new visual morality, the cinematic eye turns into its own narrative center. It shoots out through the movie's moral process, and, via a sequence of flashbacks, converges in its own beginning--arriving in a shot made possible within the movie, but not, until now, made visible. An old couple in an old convertible are forced off the road by the newly-

born convoy. As the powerful trucks rush by, the perturbed couple turn to one another and kiss, dispersing their annoyance and promoting the loving spirit of convoying. Moreover, as images born into action in the movie's creative phase, they become not old, but new. And they carry forward the movie's imaginative act until, in the middle of their kiss, the image freezes and the narrative genius of the cinematic imagination, the genius to see life in the act of creation, passes into the movie-viewer.

Drafted through the movie's action as the new agent of convoying, the viewer's eye, imaginatively centered and centering through the movie's images, completes the creative act initiated in The Wild Bunch, carried forward in Cable Hogue, and matured in Convoy. In imaginatively undergoing Peckinpah's creative process--in opening to the possibility of the new morality through "shooting out," in participating in the evolutionary "springing" of the new method of narrative advance, and in correlating or "going with" the powers of action that come to the fore in "convoying"--the viewer's eye enters the moral field of Peckinpah's art and comes to see the new value in images. Within that new morality, images shed their intellectual, spatial identities as illusory imitations of a "real" world, and become not things, or the shadows of things, but acts, completely empirical agents of transformation that generate the new universe of potent individuals. Having "got a copy" on the creative process itself, Peckinpah's cinematic imagination, through the images it narrates, enacts the new creation and makes it an accomplished possibility and an actual value and force in life. When the viewer's eye "goes with" the new possibility, when it, with Peckinpah, completes the moral process, it (like Lyle) leaves behind the old morality that, through the voice of reason, thrives on tension, conflict, structure, and ends, and it enters

into the new universe that favors coherence, continuity, and beginnings. Then what the movie viewer sees as the lights in the theatre come on is no different from what he sees in the movie--images born with and in the light, already involved in creative advance--and his moral eye, opened through Peckinpah's visual art, becomes born into imaging.

Notes

[1] "Convoying," thus, like "springing" and "shooting out," promotes birth and moral growth. More than mere "going together," convoying performs the inherent power in images to unite, exchange moral energies, and break away transformed.

[2] In Peckinpah's eye, Hildy's power as an image exceeds that of Violet, who, like her, is a natural female; but her power is less than that of Melissa. A modern female, Melissa is less hampered by the baggage of respectability which Hildy acquires as part of her advance. Melissa's intellect also gives her an advantage over Hildy, as does her mobility.

[3] The colors of blue, white, and brown appear prominently in The Wild Bunch. Their prominence in the beginning of Convoy advances the sensory value of The Wild Bunch as a creative power within the new movie. In a similar way, the visible green world of The Wild Bunch figures imaginatively in the "springing" of the desert in Cable Hogue.

[4] The seed convoy brings forward, in a trinary form, the new bunch alive at the end of The Wild Bunch, and the new community of individuals who survive Cable and who have their birth in the three-way relation of Cable, Josh, and Hildy. The seed convoy looks forward to the growth of the convoy itself as a "new bunch," together with the larger community of spectators who join in "convoying"--spectators imaged in the crowds that appear in the movie, as well as the spectators of the movie itself.

[5] Rubber Duck's imaginative activity happens much sooner in the movie than does that of Pike and Cable, and it is more immediately fruitful.

[6] That Convoy is more advanced than Cable Hogue is evident in the fact that the aesthetic value in art occurs earlier (in the physical phase and as a means of evolving unitive action) than it does in Cable Hogue, where it appears (in the "Butterfly Mornings" sequence) as the central act of the intellectual phase.

[7] Reverend Joshua Duncan Sloan, via his name, obviously advances Josh's value. The new Reverend Sloan, however, disposes of Josh's rhetoric. He speaks less, and when he does speak, he clearly focuses spiritual power as a power in life and images, not in words.

[8] See Frank Burke, "Peckinpah's Convoy: The Metaphysics of Motion" (University of Manitoba, unpublished manuscript, no date). Burke's essay extensively discusses the value of love and "marriage" in Convoy. His is the only critical writing I have seen that attempts to see what images do in Convoy.

[9] The sequence of shots leading up to the roadblock break-through recall those in The Wild Bunch leading to the train's collision. In particular, the zoom-in to Rubber Duck's eyes recalls the close-up of the young officer's eyes at the moment of the collision. Cinematically, the roadblock sequence reveals that "shooting out" operates within the new creative value of "convoying." Moreover, rather than completing in an explosion--which occurs in The Wild Bunch with the bridge blast--this new version of "shooting out" brings the explosive potential of conflict within the old order into alignment with the convoy. But now those energies are centered in the flashing lights of the patrol cars and motorcycles that appear throughout the remainder of the intellectual phase as escorts of the convoy.

[10] Among the video crew appears a man wearing headphones and standing next to the camera. He gives directions of some sort, but for the most part he watches what is happening and smiles. The man is Sam Peckinpah. Convoy is the second of his movies in which Peckinpah appears. In the first, Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid, he plays a coffin-maker and has a speaking part. In Convoy, however, he is foremost an image moving with the action. His "character" appears in his alignment with the documentary camera. This relation, of the director to the documentary image, becomes cinematically explicit in Osterman Weekend, the movie following Convoy, which begins with video (as opposed to film) footage, and narrates the death inherent in the documentary "monitor" image. In Convoy, however, Peckinpah imagines himself "convoying" within the limits of his intellectual, "directorial" persona.

[11] The lights, in their radiance, also image the creative value of "shooting out."

[12] The creative phase grows out of, and is an extension of, the movie's moral phase. In the creative phase, the new beginning takes form: in The Wild Bunch, the new bunch come together and the Bunch's images resurrect; in Cable Hogue, Cable's genius passes into the moving camera eye and seeks new images of life. In Convoy, the creative phase--which begins with Melissa's turning from the "death" scene to the funeral sequence and continues through the end of the movie--is much more pronounced.

[13] Numerous photographs of Sam Peckinpah show his light-colored beard and the customary bandana he wears angled around his head. Given the fact that Peckinpah literally imagines himself into Convoy in the video crew, it makes narrative sense to see the New Rubber Duck as a new image of Peckinpah--one through which the directorial persona evident in the video-crew image gives way to a visual union between Peckinpah's genius and the central human image that enacts the narrative advance of that genius. Peckinpah's and the New Rubber Duck's images literally have "got a copy of" each other.

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